



SINIPARKSI

# TAKING CARE OF POPULATION THROUGH CONTEMPORARY DANCE

— training kit written by —

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# INTRODUCTION



# Designing the Training Kit: A Guide to Co-Create with a Cultural Diverse Group

Understanding the potential of contemporary dance to promote well-being, the SINIPARKSI European exchange project was designed to make this art form accessible to a broad audience, while actively embracing the cultural diversity of communities across Europe. With the awareness that choreographers and dance educators must be better equipped to engage with human and social diversity, the project focused on developing inclusive training opportunities, driven by two central questions:

- How can a dance piece be collaboratively created by choreographers and non-professional participants?
- How can cultural diversity be transformed into a powerful force for co-creation?

Four European dance companies via their choreographers— based in France, Greece, Germany, and Croatia — re-examined their practices through a co-creation field experiment (co-creation workshop) with local communities from culturally diverse backgrounds. These experiences allowed the development and testing of inclusive co-creation methodologies with a wide range of participants, including immigrants, refugees, and residents from both rural and urban settings. In doing so, the choreographers broadened their perspectives, refined their methods, and reimagined

dance as an inclusive space.

Through these challenges, the SINIPARKSI project has actively supported the development and dissemination of community-based artistic initiatives that uphold cultural rights across Europe. As an essential part of human rights, cultural rights safeguard the identity, language, and traditions of communities, ensuring the freedom of artistic expression without discrimination or coercion. By promoting cultural participation for all, SINIPARKSI aims to empower communities and reaffirm the role of dance as a universal language of inclusion.

The knowledge gained through these experiences has been merged in the SINIPARKSI Training Kit—a pedagogical guide, accompanied by video tutorials, designed to help dance professionals foster cultural inclusion in their work. It supports choreographers and dance educators in developing inclusive artistic and pedagogical



approaches that embrace cultural diversity.

This kit offers tools for adapting choreographic practices to the unique cultural and social perspectives of diverse communities, ensuring that dance becomes an accessible and meaningful experience for all, regardless of background or previous experience.

It provides choreographers with concrete guidance to cultivate the sense of belonging, equality, and creative expression, guiding groups through the entire process of co-creating a performance—from the first steps to the final presentation.

In this training kit, both professionals and non-professionals—dance choreographers and other performing artists—will find:

- Approaches on how to improve their artistic practice.
- Pedagogical tools for initiating the creative process in culturally diverse contexts.
- Reflections from participants and choreographers who took part in the





challenges.

The approaches are organized according to the following chapters:

#### ***Chapter 1: Universal Dance Language***

Contemporary dance transcends cultural and linguistic boundaries, offering a universal mode of expression. This chapter provides tools for developing effective non-verbal communication and using movement as a bridge between participants.

#### ***Chapter 2: Taking care of Population Through Contemporary Dance***

Creating a supportive and inclusive environment is essential to fostering participants' expression and creativity. This chapter explores strategies for promoting individual well-being, strengthening group cohesion, and building a space conducive to co-creation.

#### ***Chapter 3: Managing Culturally Diverse Groups***

Working with a group of diverse cultural backgrounds, languages, and experiences presents both challenges and opportunities. This chapter offers key

insights into building an inclusive atmosphere where each participant can contribute meaningfully to the creative process.

#### ***Chapter 4: Leadership Roles of The Choreographer.***

The choreographer takes on multiple roles: director, shadowing leader, mentor, and facilitator. This chapter discusses how to create an inspiring work environment, support co-creation, and accompany participants through an engaging and collaborative process.

#### ***Chapter 5: Facilitation of Creation***

Active participation and movement exploration are at the heart of co-creation. This chapter offers methods that combine improvisation and structure to encourage both individual and collective expression.

In addition, the video training kit presents exemplary situations demonstrating how to apply the tools in practice, including excerpts from the challenges, choreographers' insights, and interviews with participants.

# **FIELDWORK : RESEARCH SETTING AND SAMPLE**

## Context of challenge on which this training kit is based

The thoughts, tools and exemplary situations described in this training kit have been elaborated following four challenge workshops, which have involved different kinds of culturally diverse groups, in different kinds of community practice context.  
see appendix\*

### ~~Athenes, Greece~~

A workshop with immigrants.

## Culturally diverse target group

### NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

Ten participants from an open call to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local solidarity communities.

### PAST EXPERIENCE IN CONTEMPORARY DANCE:

All participants were immigrants from different countries that had never practiced contemporary dance or participated in a similar activity.

### CULTURAL BACKGROUND:

The workshop organized by Quo Vadis brought together a culturally diverse group of participants, including two young women from Somalia, a young girl from Sierra Leone, two elderly women from China, a man from Bangladesh, two women from Ukraine, and two young women from

France.

This diversity also encompassed a range of religious practices, which influenced participants' levels of engagement and interaction within the group. Notably, three individuals chose not to be filmed or photographed, pointing to the significance of respecting privacy and personal boundaries. Additionally, some participants wore clothing not suited for dance or movement due to religious or cultural reasons.

All participants were living in Athens or the surrounding areas at the time of the workshop—some had been residing in Greece for several years, while others had arrived more recently. Most were connected to local associations or solidarity networks and came into contact with Quo Vadis for the first time during the participant recruitment process.

### **LANGUAGE DYNAMICS:**

Each participant spoke their native language, with some having some familiarity with English and others with Greek.

Language barriers presented an additional challenge, making mutual support among participants essential for fully understanding the instructions and engaging with the practice.

Among the group, three young girls from Somalia initially displayed a close connection, often remaining together as if to protect one another. However, by the second day, as they became more at ease in the workshop environment, they began interacting and collaborating with other participants.

By the end of the workshop, they had integrated seamlessly into the group, showing remarkable social adaptability and a growing sense of cohesion.

## **Community practice context**

### **DURATION AND LOCATION:**

A three day, co-creation dance workshop that took place in Athens, Greece, concluded with a public performance.

Each session lasted three hours, divided between practice and creation/choreography, with the outdoor rehearsal and performance lasting approximately two hours.

### **WORKSHOP AND PERFORMANCE VENUES:**

Utopia Laboratory & Plato's Academy, Athens.

### **LEADING TEAM:**

Sabrina Marwa (Seneca intensiv), assisted by Jördis Wölk, from Germany, as a participant interacting with the group.

### **SPECIFIC CHALLENGES FACED:**

The unique situation of creating with immigrants from a variety of communities, with religious diversity, posed significant challenges, primarily due to the language barriers and the diverse backgrounds of the participants. The choreographer had to adopt a lateral approach in her communication with the group, constantly finding creative solutions to bridge the language gap. It was also essential to consider and respect the participants' different cultural backgrounds.

In the field of dance training, several key strategies were essential in addressing the challenges encountered during practice. Breaking the ice was crucial in fostering an open and collaborative environment from the outset. Establishing a clear communication code ensured that all participants were aligned, facilitating smooth interactions. Finding common points of connection among participants helped build a cohesive group dynamic.



## **Sitia, Crete**

Dance experience for the first time in a small town, with a performance in public space.

## **Culturally diverse target group**

### **NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:**

Twenty-two people initially registered for the workshop through open call in collaboration with the municipality; Nine of them went through the whole process and participated in the performance.

(Except for one participant who expressed she felt too old (being sixty-seven years old) to stay in the workshop, and one who was living too far and did not have any transportation means to come to Sitia, the people who did not continue the process were non professional latin dancers who had to participate to another dance event held at the same time in town.)

### **PAST EXPERIENCE IN CONTEMPORARY DANCE:**

Out of the nine participants who experienced the full workshop, only one had a brief experience in contemporary dance in the past. Therefore, most of the participants were introduced to contemporary dance for the first time during this workshop.

### **AGE OF PARTICIPANTS:**

Whereas the youngest participant was fourteen years old, the oldest was seventy three years old. Age variety comes along with differences in physical abilities, which can be directly felt in the dance field.

## **INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY:**

Socially, the group was relatively balanced, as the group mainly consisted of women with shared social and professional experiences. The group consisted exclusively of female participants.

In this particular case, one person had a hearing impairment and another was pregnant; both circumstances influenced, in different ways, the participants' ability to move through space and, consequently, affected the group dynamic.

However, thanks to clear communication and a strong willingness to adapt to each individual's needs, these circumstances were not seen as obstacles, but rather as specific conditions to be mindfully considered during the co-creative process.

## **CULTURAL BACKGROUND:**

There was genuine diversity among the participants, primarily in terms of cultural background, with three of them being non-Greek.

Quite unexpectedly for a workshop held in a small town, the group included individuals from a range of backgrounds. While most participants were Greek—including one woman originally from the town who now lives permanently in Argentina and was visiting Sitia for holidays—there were also three international participants, from France, Croatia, and Israel.

This cultural diversity was acknowledged from the very start, during the introductory circle where each person had the opportunity to introduce themselves. It also became a valuable resource throughout the creative process. One session, which was later incorporated into the final performance, invited participants to share a childhood game from their own cultural context through movement. Each woman presented her game by demonstrating a series of gestures, which the entire group then repeated together.

# Community practice context

## DURATION AND LOCATION:

A three day, co-creation dance workshop that took place in Sitia, Greece, concluded with a public performance.

## WORKSHOP AND PERFORMANCE VENUES:

The workshop took place in the 3rd Primary School of Sitia & the final performance at the square of the town.

## LEADING TEAM:

Melita Spahic Bezjak (Free Dance),  
Isabelle Bazin Mazuel (Ascen-Danse)

Although both choreographers were professional dancers in the contemporary field, they came from different cultural backgrounds—one being French and the other Croatian. As a result, they had to co-create across cultural differences, engaging in mutual learning and open communication while designing a workshop that would be accessible and meaningful for a culturally diverse group.

## SPECIFIC CHALLENGES FACED:

The group of inexperienced dancers presented a wide range of movement diversity, both in terms of age and physical ability. One participant was five months pregnant, and another experienced hearing difficulties. These differences naturally influenced the movement possibilities and required attentiveness from the facilitators, but rather than being obstacles, they became specific conditions that enriched the group dynamic.

As the workshop took place in August in Crete, the weather was particularly warm. In response, both participants and choreographers jointly decided to move the sessions outdoors. This gesture of flexibility not only improved comfort but also fostered a stronger sense of collective decision-making, allowing participants to see their input valued and incorporated into the process.





## Briançon, France

Site specific co-creation with experimented dancers.

## Culturally diverse target group

### NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:

The group consisted of a total of ten individuals selected through an open call.

### PAST EXPERIENCE IN CONTEMPORARY DANCE:

The group was composed of six young adult, experienced German female dancers from Berlin, along with one amateur and two beginners from the Ascen-Danse dance school, and one complete beginner French dancer.

### AGE OF PARTICIPANTS:

Participants ranged in age from



twenty-one to sixty-six years old.

### CULTURAL BACKGROUND:

While the French participants were from the northern part of the Hautes-Alpes region, the German participants were based in Berlin.

Overall, the participants' backgrounds included France, Germany, Denmark, Indonesia, Algeria, and Spain.

### LANGUAGE DYNAMICS:

The German participants were speaking English, and a few also had some knowledge of French. Among the French participants, two were speaking a little English, while two others did not speak English at all. The German choreographer did not speak French, while the French choreographer spoke a little English.

Various ways were explored to facilitate communication under these circumstances, with all three languages—French, English, and German—being used throughout the workshop. In the end, it became evident that non-verbal and embodied communication proved to be the most effective tool for connection and collaboration.

# Community practice context

## DURATION AND LOCATION:

A three-day co-creation workshop took place at the Briançon Theater, located in a very small town in the rural, mountainous region of northern Hautes-Alpes. The workshop culminated in performances on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, organized at the theater's request as part of the Heritage Day celebrations.

## WORKSHOP AND PERFORMANCE VENUES:

The workshop unfolded over several phases. It began on Friday with an exploration of the theater as a site-specific space for dance research. On Saturday, the participants continued this exploration and presented an initial version of a guided tour. On Sunday, they refined the performance and presented it a second time. The aim was to creatively reimagine the use of various rooms in the theater, shifting their conventional functions in order to explore the theme of "dream."

The final session took place outdoors, in the town itself, offering participants a chance to connect with the environment and enjoy some fresh air.

## LEADING TEAM:

Isabelle Bazin Mazuel (Ascen-Danse) and Sabrina Marwa (Seneca Intensiv).

## SPECIFIC CHALLENGES FACED:

Because the first performance was scheduled for the second day of the workshop, participants had to engage in an intense and fast-paced creation process right from the start, working continuously throughout the first day. This tight schedule was both demanding and tiring.

The group improvised and explored twelve different rooms within the theater. For each space, they co-created material and linked it into a cohesive narrative. To do so, they exchanged imaginaries or used body-based explorations. Eventually, they composed a guided tour structured around improvisational scores.

A key emphasis was placed on giving participants space to develop their own ideas. They worked in small mixed groups (two to four people), creating opportunities for rich exchanges of imagination, adaptability, and mutual learning. The choreographers moved between groups, acting as facilitators — offering feedback, guidance, or more structured instructions when necessary.



## **KARLOVAC, CROATIA**

First-time dance experience with a musician and a theatre performance.

### **Culturally diverse target group**

#### **NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:**

The group consisted of twenty participants, selected through an open call.

#### **PAST EXPERIENCE IN CONTEMPORARY DANCE:**

Participants had varying levels of dance experience. While a few had some non-professional background, the majority were engaging with contemporary dance for the first time.

#### **AGE OF PARTICIPANTS:**

The group represented a broad cross-section of Karlovac's urban community. It included children (aged ten to fourteen), teenagers (fourteen to nineteen), young adults, adults (twenty and over), and a special group of seniors (fifty and above).

#### **CULTURAL BACKGROUND:**

The workshop brought together participants from diverse cultural backgrounds—including Croatia, Slovenia, and Canada—which, together with the variety of hometowns within Croatia, significantly influenced the group's movement vocabulary and interpersonal dynamics. Distinct regional cultures—such as those of Karlovac, Zagreb, and Petrinja—shaped how participants related to one another and approached the movement tasks. The group exhibited a unique energy, blending the urban influences of larger cities with the grounded, intimate qualities of smaller towns, which resulted in a rich and multifaceted creative process.

#### **LANGUAGE DYNAMICS:**

Communication throughout the workshop

was notably effective. Sessions were conducted in English, and even the youngest participants adapted with ease. The clarity of instruction and structure contributed to a shared understanding across the group. Remarkably, language differences posed no obstacle, with children comprehending and engaging in the process confidently and fluently.

### **Community practice context**

#### **DURATION AND LOCATION:**

A three-day workshop in Karlovac, Croatia, concluded with a performance on the final day.

#### **WORKSHOP AND PERFORMANCE VENUES:**

The workshop took place at Karlovac's Free Dance contemporary dance studio and Kino Edison, a multifunctional cultural venue. The final performance was presented at Kino Edison, a recognized public cultural institution.

#### **LEADING TEAM:**

Melita Spahić Bezjak (Free Dance), Isabelle Bazin Mazuel (Ascen-Danse), and Zafeiria Tsirakaki (Quo Vadis).

#### **SPECIFIC CHALLENGES FACED:**

One key feature that distinguished this workshop within the Siniparksi series was the inclusion of a live musician. This added a unique creative dimension, enriching the interplay between sound and movement and fostering deeper collaboration across artistic disciplines.

Another challenge was the broad age range of participants, from ten to sixty-two years old. Working across generations required mindful adaptation, as different age groups brought varied perspectives, physical capacities, and familiarity with contemporary dance.

Additionally, for most participants, this was their first time performing on a theatre stage, making the experience both exciting and challenging.

# **PRACTICES AND REFLECTIONS OF CO-CREATION**

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01

**Universal dance  
language**

01



## 1.1 Universality of Dance

The concept of a universal dance language is based on the idea that dance, as a form of expression, transcends cultural, linguistic, and societal boundaries. Dance is inherently rooted in the human body, which serves as a universal medium for communication. From the earliest times, rhythmic movement has been a natural way of expressing feelings. Experiencing contemporary dance can foster mutual understanding, encourage creativity, and enhance critical thinking and verbalization skills. Dance is more than a physical activity; it allows people to get to know each other.

The integration of dance and music enhances the kinaesthetic experience, improving concentration, memory self-discipline, and focus. Moreover, the development of self-awareness through dance is closely linked to the acquisition of behavioural patterns that are crucial for community life and social interaction. Dance teaches us the profound importance of non-verbal communication, allowing us to understand one another almost intuitively.

Contemporary dance is an ever-evolving art form thriving on diversity and integration. It provides a space for various cultural dance codes and styles to merge seamlessly, creating rich and multidimensional movement vocabularies. Taking elements from ballet, modern dance, hip-hop, traditional folk dances, martial arts or even circus contemporary dance absorbs and transforms these influences into something entirely new. This not only expands the possibilities of movement but also creates a deeper cross-cultural exchange.

Understanding contemporary dance involves acknowledging its diverse influences, which stem from various cultural traditions, somatic practices, and experimental choreographic approaches. The genre embraces fluidity, adaptability, and the deconstruction of conventional movement patterns, making it an ideal medium for exploring the body's expressive potential.

## 1.2 Key elements of Contemporary dance

A key part of the creative process in contemporary dance is introducing an idea or a *meaning* to movements. Concepts give purpose to performing, making it a meaningful experience for mind, body and soul. The body's natural *gestures* are already a way of expression, such as open arms that could suggest welcome or freedom. Beyond that, the way a dancer positions their body in space can tell a story without words. Humans naturally create pulse, rhythms and meanings with their body. Contemporary dance embraces the habitual movements of everyday life, transforming embodied experience into authentic and complete expression.

*Breathing*, as a natural process, is also a

key element of universal dance language. It is both a movement of air and a rhythmic process. It helps participants understand time, suspension, rhythm, pulse, unison movement, contrast, and silence. Breath also aids in relaxation and grounding, enhancing both dance performance and overall well-being.

The use of breath can extend beyond simple rhythmic synchronization; it can also serve as a dynamic force that influences movement intention and *quality*. For example, the breath can guide the movement into dancing softly or hard, or even with impulses. Rhythm can be created by using breathing to set pauses, or by performing a movement slowly or fast. When breath is used consciously, it can transform movement from mechanical execution to organic flow, allowing dancers to fully embody their movement. Incorporating breath into dance exercises also strengthens the mind-body connection, facilitating deeper engagement with movement material.

**TOOL: "Awakening"**

**TOOL: "Touch (warming up)"**

Emotions, gestures, rhythm, and breath serve as a foundation for generating ideas in workshops or co-choreographed projects involving dancers, amateurs, and diverse populations.







Some fundamental technical elements of contemporary dance include the use of the floor. This goes along with an explanation on how to use the body as an instrument: On how to bend the joints, transfer weight, approaching the floor safely, expanding the movement, and using techniques like the spiral and the feet to rise back to standing.

#### **TOOL: "Colour Game"**

Dancing together means exploring space as a group. The choreographer helps the participants to get familiar with different levels, dimensions and sizes of movement. The participants can play around with distance and closeness towards each other. It is fundamental to be aware of the group, to counterbalance freedom in the collective dance. For that sake, choreographers can help participants to foster their capacity for a peripheric gaze where they are aware of others in the space without looking at them directly. Playing around with different group constellations, such as soli, duets or trios helps participants to connect with others and to understand their position in space.

**TOOL:** Offering the participants a warm-up routine, such as **"Awakening"**, helps explore the connection between breath and movement. The instructions foster the participants' availability to get in touch with their bodies, their emotional state, the space and the others around them. While helping the participants to ground themselves and to observe their breath and movement flow, it's the starting point to an intuitive movement and a meaningful improvisation.

**TOOL:** The **"Touch (warming up)"** practice introduces participants to fundamental principles of contemporary dance, such as body awareness, spatial perception, and interaction with others. Through the exploration of touch, participants are encouraged to develop the ability to listen to their bodies, recognize subtle shifts in sensation, and connect with movement in a spontaneous, non-technical way. This approach cultivates sensitivity to both the body and the surrounding space, which is a key element in contemporary dance.

**TOOL:** A game called **"Colour Game"** can serve as an excellent icebreaker and a way to gently introduce floor work. In this game, each colour represents a different movement task, e.g. red could mean running, yellow could signify slow movement, black could indicate jumping, and so on. You can then assign colours to different ways of engaging with the floor—orange could represent sitting, red could mean lying completely down, and green could be about just touching the floor.

**TOOL:** The **"Gaze"** can be used as the initial point of interaction, fostering trust between the participants and encouraging physical and emotional presence.

**TOOL: "Gaze"**

## 1.3. Significance of daily gestures

The clarity and precision of movement are crucial in dance. Daily gestures offer a foundation for understanding how the body can express without words and how to interact with others, while providing a playful and accessible way to engage with more complex contemporary dance techniques.

**TOOL: "Storytelling with gestures"**

Daily gestures include common, recognizable body language expressions, both conscious and subconscious, such as walking, laughing, turning, waving, hugging, pointing, and holding hands. Gestures can be altered or exaggerated in a playful manner to easily create meaningful movements.

Daily gestures can be a great tool to introduce the concept of body relations in space; by amplifying gestures, one can tap into how to use the transition of weight, the concept of balance, and spatial awareness. Touching is a cultural habit. With a group where touch is not a barrier a simple handshake could transform into a counterbalance situation, or a hug could evolve into a lift. A wave of the hand, usually a simple gesture of greeting, can be turned into an exercise to explore how one moves through

negative space.

**TOOL: "Hello and Goodbye"**

The diverse ways one can do gestures according to one's cultural background enrich a groups' movement vocabulary. Pointing out cultural differences in daily gestures can foster cultural understanding. In the context of language barriers, daily gestures can help to understand each other with very few words.

Exercises like "NameMotion" and "Mingling" translate these cultural nuances into movement, offering creative ways to explore identity, foster connection, and communicate across language barriers through shared gestural expression.

**TOOL: "NameMotion"**

**TOOL: "Mingling"**

The choreographer should adapt to participants' communication styles initially before introducing exercises that challenge familiar patterns. This fosters a safe and respectful environment for movement exploration. Once gesture movements are gathered, they can be accumulated to a movement sequence. The co-creation process can be further developed using feelings inherent in everyday gestures.

**TOOL: "Imagine watching a show"**



**TOOL:** The tool **"Storytelling with gestures"** allows participants to communicate only by using gestures and movements. This exercise encourages playful interaction and spontaneity. It shows the diversity or recognisable gestures across cultures. It develops a new way how the participants can create a dialogue using storytelling as a non-verbal communication. This is also very helpful when the group doesn't have a common language or two and this breaks down barriers of how one can talk to one another and work together.

**TOOL:** A choreographer can easily create a performative scene with participants by using habitual ways and gestures of meeting someone. The exercise **"Hello and Goodbye"** allows the participants to quickly create movement material by using daily gestures as foundation.



**TOOL:** **"NameMotion"** is an icebreaker exercise that invites participants to explore personal identity and group connection by expressing their names through gesture and movement. This simple yet creative task invites participants to introduce themselves by transforming their names into gestures or short movement phrases.

**TOOL:** **"Mingling"** is an exercise that invites participants on a journey to explore the movements of greetings and cultural gestures.

**TOOL:** The tool **"Imagine watching a show"** uses daily gestures that have a strong emotional expression to create a movement sequence.

02



**Taking care  
of population through  
contemporary dance**

02





## 2.1. Open-mindedness & curiosity

When both choreographers and participants approach the process with open minds, the dance workshop becomes a dynamic, fluid experience where everyone's perspectives, ideas, and creativity are enriching the process. Choreographing in the sense of inclusion means looking for different approaches to recognize, find and promote the personal qualities of the participants. There is no formula, as every individual is different. Inclusivity should be a priority by acknowledging the diversity of body types, cultures, and creative expressions.

The choreographer creates a collaborative framework for the dance experience that allows participants to grow according to their mental, physical and social state. By encouraging involvement, the participants can contribute to the shared codes of conduct and can help shape the experience according to their personal backgrounds and values. Thereby, the feeling of being connected to each other, invested into the process and valued as a person might increase.

Embodying open-mindedness in the co-creation process is essential for nurturing creativity, fostering inclusivity and generating trust. For this, it's essential not to jump to conclusions too quickly, allowing questioning and the connection to develop naturally. It is important to treat each other with benevolence and curiosity. The choreographer serves as a role model for the whole group. Allowing participants to observe others through the choreographer's gracious perspective fosters mutual respect and admiration.

By embracing awkwardness and offering ideas to amplify it, choreographers can encourage open-mindedness in movements and concepts. The choreographer demonstrates how to move beyond comfort zones, helping the participants to stretch their own limits and to enter the learning process. The goal is to inspire participants to explore new and unconventional ways of moving. This approach helps participants to break free from habitual patterns, fostering creativity and innovation in their dance practice.

## 2.2 Well-being of the participants

Well-being is essential in the process of taking care of the population. It can be achieved by prioritizing **well-being in the structural aspects, the overall atmosphere and the didactical practice** of a co-creation workshop.

To foster a welcoming environment, it is crucial to consider the participants' backgrounds, age groups, and daily schedules. Since they are not professionals, they need time to transition from their everyday routines into the creative process. Using soft music, greeting participants individually, and creating a cosy, inviting space can help in this transition. Encouraging self-awareness through introspective exercises focused on breath, body energy and volume, weight, and movement sensations enhances the experience.

The space where the workshop takes place must be safe and appropriate. Ideally, there should be at least two separate spaces—one for creative work and another for breaks.

The choreographer can enhance the experience for participants, ensuring they feel cared for, joyful, body and mind eased and connected. Participants need to feel safe and comfortable in their bodies. Therefore, the choreographer can integrate exercises that help grounding to set the tone for relaxation and connection to one's own body, space and time. The choreographer might start by inviting participants to breathe deeply and become aware of their surroundings, then adding exercises that are focussing the spine or the connection between the participants.

### TOOL: "Gaze"

Besides, the participants can deepen their understanding of how to take care of their own bodies. To encourage participants to take responsibility for their bodies and prevent fatigue, the choreographer should provide enough breaks in the schedule. The choreographer can also invite participants to take breaks as needed and remind them that it's okay to listen to their own limits. The choreographer needs some flexibility in planning to be able to adjust the music or modifying the schedule if the group needs it.

### TOOL: "Awakening"



Joy is also a constitutive element of well-being. Exercises that surprise and engage participants, create a dynamic and joyful environment. Playful games can evoke flexibility in reaction and the spontaneous answer to an impulse enhances excitement, improvisation and collaboration.

**TOOL: "1-2-3 Freeze!"**

Humour and storytelling, including personal stories from the choreographer's journey, can also make participants feel more connected and comfortable.

To increase participants' concentration, focus-enhancing rituals are essential. Closure exercises, such as relaxation or grounding activities, help participants centre themselves and find clarity and purpose in the movement. Alternating rhythms during rehearsals—combining moments of silence with dynamic activity—can also heighten focus and create a balanced energy within the group. Further, tools like "Trustcare" deepen trust, emotional connection, and collaborative exploration.

**TOOL: "Trustcare"**



**TOOL:** The practice of allowing movement and connection to others coming out of the gaze is explained in the tool list **"Gaze"**. Using the gaze as interaction between people allows the group to see every participant and to let movement happen naturally out of sharing a connection.

**TOOL:** The warm-up exercise **"Awakening"** invites participants into a slow, mindful exploration of their physicality, with a focus on alignment, balance, and spatial awareness. The goal is to enhance body awareness through mindful movement, cultivate balance and spatial sensitivity, and support fluid transitions between levels and movement qualities.

**TOOL:** The **"1-2-3 Freeze!"** game can serve as an ice-breaker that allows the choreographer to introduce fundamental elements of contemporary dance such as rhythm, the use of stillness or some movement qualities while creating joy and playfulness within the group.

**TOOL: "Trustcare"** is an exercise that invites participants to explore trust, emotional connection, and rhythmic interplay, fostering deep personal growth and collaborative exploration. It incorporates dream states and emphasizes taking care of a partner from a distance.

## 2.3 Collective imagination

Collective imagination is a creative process through which individuals transcend personal vision to co-create shared artistic realities. In dance and choreography, this practice becomes a powerful tool for deep collaboration, innovation, and mutual inspiration.

Collective imagination arises when individuals come together to explore, to dream and to envision new creative possibilities. It allows participants to nourish themselves from the group, feel inspired and develop a sense of belonging. This process enables personal insights to merge with group dynamics, fostering the emergence of concepts and ideas that could not have been conceived individually. Through both personal and shared exploration, participants shape collective visions that unify, provoke, and give rise to compelling artworks, performances, or creative solutions.

Emerging from the core of this process, collective imagination emphasizes co-creation. It values participation, shared perspectives, and the democratic nature of decision-making within the creative process. It invites mutual support, active listening, and the reinforcement of ideas through collective input. The creation and sharing of a common image—a shared condition that extends beyond the limits of any one person's imagination, such as that of the choreographer—is central to this process. Choreographers and participants are called to communicate their imagined realities, as if stepping into the same dream, and to co-decide its unfolding. Rather than following a singular vision, the group builds a collective space of imagination, where each contribution matters and new meaning can emerge through collaboration.



To nourish this kind of creative process, choreographers can draw inspiration from the cultural diversity of the group—using common elements of intangible cultural heritage, symbolic objects, or artistic references as starting points. Equally important is the recognition of diverse interpretations, as they enrich the process and offer fertile ground for creative transformation. However, especially when working with non-professionals or participants without prior experience, it is essential to first cultivate a sense of equality and co-responsibility within the group. The choreographer needs to create a safe, inclusive, and participatory environment where every voice is valued, and participants feel empowered to contribute. This can be achieved through practices such as collective brainstorming, allowing everyone to share their ideas before moving forward, or through equal participation in decision-making regarding themes, movements, or directions.



This process of mutual respect and shared agency is not a preliminary step, but an integral part of the artistic creation itself. It ensures that the collective imagination can unfold in a genuine, meaningful way, as every participant has an active role in co-shaping the vision. Only when such a foundation is established, the group can collaborate creatively, imagining and realizing a project that goes beyond individual limits.

This approach not only values cultural reference points, but also translates them into embodied practices, as seen in the task "Mingling", which explores the simple act of "saying hello" and becomes a springboard for collective imagination.

#### **TOOL: "Mingling"**

When dancers collaborate, they don't just combine movements; they bring together diverse perspectives, emotions, and creative instincts. This fusion can spark unexpected ideas and push the boundaries of what's possible. One dancer's gesture might inspire a group phrase; one person's story might become the seed for a whole piece.

#### **TOOL: "Living Painting"**

#### **TOOL: "Coat"**



**TOOL:** In exercise "Mingling" participants are encouraged to embody a wide range of gestures—from bows and handshakes to nods, waves, and cultural rituals—transforming them into expressive movement sequences. Through group improvisation and guided reflection, individual gestures are woven into a shared choreography that honors diverse origins while forming a unified and vibrant composition.

**TOOL:** The tool "Living Painting" enhances collective imagination by encouraging participants to take time to observe an image created by bodies in space, share thoughts and interpretations, and collectively decide on the action to be embodied. Through this process, they co-create a shared visual and physical narrative, responding to each other's movements and choices in real time. The exercise strengthens the group's ability to imagine together, transforming still imagery into a dynamic, living experience.

**TOOL:** For example, a daily object such as a "Coat" is a reference to daily gestures and movements for everyone. Further, the object serves as a starting point for associations that can be used to create movement material. Guided exploration with such an object allows storytelling through dance. By discovering the object, its material, functions or meanings, a collective imagination can be explored.

## 2.4 Self-expression

Self-expression is a vital element in the creative process, allowing participants to channel their individuality and emotions into movement and storytelling. By cultivating an environment that encourages freedom, imagination, and structure, participants can explore their unique voices while contributing to a collective vision.

Supporting individual voices means creating space for participants to share ideas and enrich the creation process with their personality and their bodies. Prompts like personal stories, poetry, creative writing, and music can inspire movement while referring to the participants' biographies and experiences. Enriching the co-creation by sharing personal stories can deepen the connection between the participants and help them to find their place in the group. Through self-expression, dancers gain confidence and feel more connected to their creative journey.

By engaging in the following exercises, participants build confidence and strengthen their engagement into the creative process.

**TOOL: "NameMotion"**

**TOOL: "Vocalmotion"**

Helping participants connect with their emotions can enhance self-expression. Emotions are at the heart of how we experience and interpret the world. It adds a layer of depth, authenticity and meaning to a form of movement. By exploring an emotional state, a movement becomes clearer, more personal and more expressive. By combining physical steps with inner experiences, the performance resonates more deeply with both the dancer and the audience. The following tools support

self-expression in dance by bridging visual and physical expression.

**TOOL: "Emojournal"**

**TOOL: "Graphismotion"**

## 2.5 Public showing as outcome

The public showing at the end of the workshop is the finale and should be shaped by the co-creative process. The goal is to create a performance that belongs to the group, reflects their journey, and celebrates their collective imagination and self-expression.

Therefore, managing performance pressure is crucial. Recognizing that stress is part of the creative process and preparing participants for it can help ease anxiety. Emphasizing that the performance is a moment of sharing rather than achieving perfection can shift the participants' focus. The choreographer can reinforce the idea that the audience is there to support and appreciate them to foster confidence.

Time management and preparation are also key to a successful performance. Allocating sufficient time for rehearsals, rest, and final adjustments ensures participants feel prepared. Moments of individual focus and practice and moments of group cohesion and collective focus should be balanced. Providing space for post-performance reflection allows participants to share their feelings and absorb the experience.

## 2.6 Well-being of the choreographer

A good time-management and structure of space and time is essential for a workshop, that also assures the well-being of the choreographer. This means that the choreographer and the whole team involved should be prepared and think of the time management through the whole workshop. To have a schedule and the objective in mind assures the choreographer to not get stressed. Within the time frame of working hours, the choreographer should schedule some time for reflection and discussion about how the workshop went so far without stress. This is necessary to reflect the needs of the participants and to consider how to adopt the planning. The time frame should always allow flexibility for adjustments according to the situation.

For the health and well-being of the choreographer, the workshop structure should provide time to warm up and stretch individually as well as having brainstorming time before and in between the sessions. Additionally, choreographers should have genuine breaks that are unrelated to work, ensuring time for meals and rest.

A strong support team is crucial, with different roles assigned to individuals handling organization, hosting, communication, and technical aspects such as lighting or music. Additionally, having someone outside the room available to assist with logistical issues, late arrivals, or health concerns ensures smooth operations. This person takes care of the facilities of the workshop. For the choreographer it can be helpful to have artistic and pedagogical assistance. This person understands the artistic vision and methods of the choreographer but takes part as a participant within the group while knowing what is going to happen. Therefore, the choreographer has a great example, a role model, inside the group that serves as a bridge between choreographer and participants and reinforces the workshop's structure and intentions.

**TOOL: "NameMotion"** is an icebreaker exercise that invites participants to explore personal identity and group connection by expressing their names through gesture and movement.

**TOOL: "Vocalmotion"** is a tool to explore the use of voice in relation to movement. It can serve as a collaborative experience where both participants and the musician co-create movement and sound together. The integration of voice, movement, and live music encourage spontaneous interaction and collective expression, while allowing for the organic development of new ideas.

**TOOL: "Emojournal"** is an excellent way to help participants explore and express their emotions through movement, drawing, and writing, while fostering self-awareness and artistic voice. It encourages dancers to reflect on how physical activity can shift emotional states and express these changes visually. This task supports emotional awareness, artistic identity, and creative autonomy in a non-judgmental space. Teachers are encouraged to frame journaling as personal expression, validate all emotions, and create a focused, supportive environment for exploration.

**TOOL: "Graphismotion"**, a movement based task, aims to deepen emotional awareness and expressive capabilities through guided movement and reflective drawing. The process encourages creative interpretation, emotional reflection, and the development of a personal visual narrative. One emotion can be explored by music, movement and drawing which helps the performance to grow.



03

**Managing culturally  
diverse groups**

03



### 3.1 Cultural diversity in Siniparksi project

The SINIPARKSI project challenged the choreographer in different ways of understanding diversity. The participants in the four challenges of practice workshops were coming from different countries, within and outside the European Union, speaking different languages, being in different ages, having different social and religious backgrounds and living either in cities or in small villages. Furthermore, all of them had different movement and dance experiences, sometimes even haven't been in contact with contemporary dance at all before the workshop.

Choreographers in the Siniparksi project also came from different cultural and professional backgrounds. Nevertheless, they found a common and shared way of co-working in teaching and choreographing. Thus, contemporary dance practice seems to transcend into the "*European way*" of approaching dance workshops.

The cultural differences between the participants have been significant, but in a common European context. In the end, proposing community dance workshops always means to work with humans. Nevertheless, the project SINIPARKSI can point out some differences that challenged the choreographers the most: These are the language barrier, the differences in age and movement experience among the participants as well as considering cultural or religious based aspects while working with physical touch. These research aspects as well as findings according to them will be elaborated in the following chapter.



## 3.2 Getting to know the group as choreographer

Feeling comfortable as choreographer and representing an authentic personality is crucial for choreographers starting a workshop with a culturally diverse group. Establishing a clear and genuine tone from the outset sets a frame in which people can gain orientation and move freely during the entire project. One of the initial challenges in working with a group that has different movement experiences is the absence of a shared movement communication code. However, this is not a limitation, as such a code can be developed throughout the workshop.

Akin to the opening of a book or movie, the first minutes are vital. These moments should make participants feel safe, introduce the workshop's key points, and provide a personal reason to engage. By taking on the responsibility as a leader, the choreographer creates an environment where participants can experience something new and feel at ease, knowing that a clear framework for conduct is in place. The role of the choreographer is to direct, not dictate, guiding the participants through the process while allowing space for individual expression. For this, a fundamental curiosity towards the people, a will to get to know them and what they can offer to the group is important. For the start of the workshop, it's important to observe the group dynamics as well as the individuals.

Some parameters can be fixed in advance to give the first get-together a better ease. The choreographer welcomes participants to the studio by introducing them to the facilities, such as the bathrooms, tea/coffee area, and available spaces. This helps make

everyone feel free and comfortable in the studio environment. It is also helpful to have a designated break room, distinguishing it from the workspace, allowing participants to relax when needed. The choreographer should be proactive, setting the tone with their own energy, creating a positive and open atmosphere.

Names of the participants can reflect personality and it's important to give them value. It is helpful to learn names as a choreographer or at least put effort in it. Name rounds, even combined with a short name game, allows participants to present themselves and arrive in the space with their identities and bodies acknowledged. Games can ensure that everyone is in the same situation, where every movement becomes equal. When everyone performs the same action, it reinforces the idea that all movements are valid, and no one is judged.

### TOOL: "NameMotion"

Establishing a connection between the choreographer and participants can be achieved by actively participating in the exercises. By letting go of inhibitions and exaggerating movements, the choreographer encourages participants to feel free to try without fear of judgment. Initially, removing pressure by not setting an end goal and focusing on brainstorming or research fosters an open environment. This approach broadens the understanding of what movement or dance can mean creating a supportive and collaborative atmosphere.

It is important that the participants adhere to the choreographer's personality and for this, the choreographer must earn trust. It means, among other things, showing who they are by sharing one's own dance, making accessible proposals, being able to take their proposals and integrate them into the choreographic process.

### 3.3 Embrace the individual perspectives

Valuing every person within a collective dynamic begins with recognising that everyone develops at their own pace. Some may progress quickly, while others take more time. Providing sincere, specific feedback is crucial. Highlighting why someone is doing well ("because...") adds depth to the appreciation. Feedback should also recognise contributions to the group, such as helping others, practising independently, or showing dedication beyond memorising steps. Valuing everyone's input and encouraging contributions, whether physical or verbal, conceptual or performative, is fundamental to ensure a rich, diverse, inclusive workshop environment.

Avoiding assumptions is essential in creating an inclusive environment. Focusing on the individual in the present, rather than their history, helps in appreciating their unique contributions. At the beginning of the workshop, treating everyone equally and working to unite them as a group, although it may seem counterintuitive, allows individuals to express themselves within the collective dynamic and arrive in the given space.

Also, the creation process will be enriched by offering space to show personalities and individual histories as well as physical states. The original artistic idea of the choreographer will always be transformed into something new by the participants according to their individual backgrounds and life experiences, as well as the collective cultural memory the individual is exposed to. The choreographer should observe these transformations of movement ideas and welcome them. The choreographers need to put themselves in a curious state of mind, trying to understand the

**TOOL:** Introducing names alongside a small movement or gesture helps participants feel present and connected. The individual movements can later be combined into a single sequence, creating a shared experience for the group. Using the tool **"NameMotion"** allows every person in the group to show themselves with a gesture and to contribute to the creation process.

ideas and intentions of the participants

Including different cultural objects, music, and other sources of inspiration helps participants within a culturally diverse group to connect with the content and to ensure a valorisation of diversity. The choreographer can ask participants to propose their own cultural objects and build the creation around them. The choreographer as well as the participants can contribute poems, pictures or personal stories to the creative process. This might empower and value the different individualities and their cultural perspectives.

**TOOL: "StoryTales"**

## 3.4 Open dialogue and mutual understanding

Creating a space for open dialogue—both verbal and non-verbal—is fundamental for fostering mutual understanding, respect, and inclusivity within a dance setting. Dance can provide an environment where everyone is encouraged to interact, to communicate and to dive into meaningful conversations, despite language barriers.

When a group shares a common spoken language, the choreographer can support dialogue through verbal reflection rounds, creating space for participants to express their thoughts, experiences, or reactions to the process. However, dialogue is not limited to words. Listening can also happen non-verbally—by attentively observing the body language, facial expressions, and physical energy of others. In this way, openness and presence become embodied.

The presence or absence of a shared spoken language can strongly influence the facilitation process. When participants do

not speak the same language, the choreographer can encourage creative strategies for communication—through movement, eye contact, imitation, and gestures. These limitations can, in fact, spark playful and imaginative interactions, fostering trust and connection beyond verbal means.

In order to create an inclusive environment, it is helpful for the choreographer to reflect on the group constellation. Gathering information in advance—such as participants' cultural backgrounds, languages spoken, or other relevant details—can help anticipate potential challenges and identify tools for building bridges. The more diverse the group, the richer the exchange of perspectives can become, allowing for more layered and meaningful creative processes.

As the process unfolds, choreographers can observe the relationships already present within the group. Understanding how people relate, who tends to lead or follow, and who might feel left out, offers valuable insight for shaping the dynamics. Intentional pairing or grouping of participants can encourage new forms of exchange, allowing individuals to step outside of familiar roles and shine in unexpected ways.

By approaching communication as a multi-layered and embodied practice, choreographers can cultivate an environment where mutual understanding becomes possible—regardless of linguistic or cultural background. This openness not only supports artistic collaboration but also reflects the deeper human values at the heart of collective creation.



## 3.5 Group cohesion

Creating group cohesion means providing awareness of the notion of space and the people situated in it. Self-confidence of individuals requires that the group becomes an entity. Finding one's own place in the group and in space is not always easy and requires guidance of the choreographer.

While pairing individuals to foster their mutual understanding, a dynamic between two people can get strong or even static throughout one sequence. In this case, it becomes more difficult to shift into a relationship with the entire group. The choreographer should ensure that the same pairs are not consistently working together, offering opportunities to experiment with other constellations. This encourages participants to dance with people they haven't worked with yet, expanding their connections and experiences. By varying partnerships, the choreographer creates different types of dance experiences for each participant, based on who they are dancing with. This dynamic enhances the overall group experience and broadens the range of creative possibilities.

**TOOL: "Bamboo Stick Connection"**

**TOOL: "Hello and Goodbye (improvisation)"**

In general, incorporating a variety of games can increase the group cohesion, as a playful approach makes activities light and fun. The primary goal is not about succeeding in the games, but rather enjoying the process, which naturally fosters unison.

At the beginning of the workshop, the choreographer should address the group as one, giving the participants the feeling of togetherness. For example, giving general feedback instead of individual feedback helps to create a sense of unity and collective progress.

**TOOL:** The role of the choreographer goes beyond guiding the movement. The creative process incorporates the different cultural backgrounds and experiences of the participants, which will be reflected in the exploration of the **"StoryTales"** tool. Each participant contributes a childhood game from their country, enriching the collaborative creation through embodied play and shared imagination.

**TOOL:** The **"Bamboo Stick Connection"** tool makes it possible to bring people into contact with each other quickly through indirect contact. The participants are required to focus their attention first on a partner, then on a smaller group and later on the whole group. In this way, the tool promotes a sense of group cohesion.

**TOOL:** The tool **"Hello and Goodbye (improvisation)"** can serve as a creation tool in which the natural way of greeting someone is used as a performative scene. It naturally builds a story and relationships between participants. Depending on how connected participants already feel, the task can even invite physical contact such as a hug.

## 3.6 Engagement in interaction

The choreographer needs to question themselves which way of interaction might fit the best to the group. Some groups can interact by language, some might sense each other through direct gazes or even physical touch, and some others might only need a shared energy in one exercise. Not every group can engage in the same level of interaction. Different approaches will be presented in the following considerations.

### 3.6.1 Verbal communication

Effective engagement in interaction starts with asking questions and actively listening to responses, fostering a dialogue about wishes, questions, and requests. Allowing others to express their thoughts, demonstrates respect for the participant's opinions. Explaining the reasoning behind decisions ensures that participants feel heard and valued, even if the choreographer takes the final decision.

The explanations and instructions given on the exercises must be formulated clearly and succinctly. They should allow the dancers to directly thrive into the experience and follow the flow of the experience. The choreographer can teach with minimal verbal instruction by using gestures or showing objects in the room. Simple, universally understood words like "Move" or "Stop and Go" can be used to guide participants, even across language barriers. When demonstrated alongside the words, these cues are easy to follow.

Lastly, the choreographer should value and leverage the diverse language skills of the participants, understanding that everyone may bring a different linguistic background to the group.

**TOOL: "StoryTales"**

### 3.6.2 Non-Verbal communication

Language serves as a structural tool for communication, but its absence does not hinder connection in contemporary dance. The body naturally participates in speech through movement, making it possible to interpret meaning without knowing the literal words. To navigate multilingual environments, clear non-verbal cues should be established to indicate agreement, misunderstanding, questions, or concerns. Additionally, language can inspire movement by integrating body language, breath, rhythm, and pauses.

**TOOL: "Storytelling with gestures"**

Working in multilingual dance environments requires a sensitivity to verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. Since participants may have varying levels of proficiency in different languages, choreographers can introduce alternative strategies such as visual cues, sound-based prompts, or the creation of a fictive language that is shared among the group.

**TOOL: "Playing with sound of voice"**

**TOOL: "Gaze"**

Movement can serve as a universal language and should be used for explanation, even when it takes more time than a verbal explanation. Instead of verbalizing instructions, the choreographer can demonstrate with another choreographer or assistance acting as a participant. This is particularly effective for explaining a pair or group task.

### 3.6.3 Physical contact

Respecting each participant's individual comfort with physical contact is essential. Physical interaction should occur naturally and never be forced. For some people, physical contact is an integral part of their culture and communication; for others, it is not. It seems important to listen and quickly perceive this cultural difference and to offer other ways of entering a relationship. The goal is to foster connections between people, rather than focusing solely on the physical act. It is important to recognize that concerns about physical contact may vary, and sensitivity to these differences is key.

#### **TOOL: "Bamboo Stick Connection".**

Further, there are tools for offering a gradual approach to physical touch. In recognizing the diverse cultural attitudes toward physical contact, it is essential to offer movement experiences that prioritize consent, trust, and emotional connection, allowing participants to engage in meaningful physical and relational exploration while respecting individual boundaries and comfort levels.

#### **TOOL: "Trustcare"**

#### **TOOL: "Touch (warming up)"**



**TOOL:** The exercise **"StoryTales"** explores childhood games. The inclusion of explanations and exclamations of these games in the different native languages of the participants enriches the creation process and represents a playful response to the multilingualism of the group.

**TOOL:** The tool **"Storytelling with gestures"** allows participants to enter into a dialogue with gestures and movements. This increases the understanding of movement as a way of communication and helps participants to get in contact with another.

**TOOL:** Sounds created by voice can inspire movements because the tone of voice often carries a lot of significance. The exercise **"Playing with sound of voice"** offers a playful approach to integrate non-verbal sound cues and to create a dialogue with sounds and movements, especially for a group with language barriers.

**TOOL:** Establishing a connection through the eyes in the tool **"Gaze"** is the first step to make contact without words and without directly touching. Getting in contact by the gaze offers a possibility to introduce interaction and further physical contact in a very smooth way.

**TOOL:** Using intermediaries, such as ropes, paper or sticks can facilitate connection without direct contact. Physical contact without touching can be created using tools like **"Bamboo Stick Connection"**. If one partner doesn't take care of the connection and balance of the object in between, it will fall. The participants are obliged to take care of their partner.

**TOOL: "Trustcare"** is a complementary practice that explores trust and connection between participants through movement. While guiding a blindfolded partner, participants care for one another and engage in intuitive physical touch.

## 3.7 Working with children in multigenerational group

When working with children in a multigenerational group, it is important to balance between the different ways in which participants of various ages perceive, express, and relate to the world. Children bring spontaneity, emotional honesty, and fresh perspectives that can enrich the collective experience, if their presence is approached with genuine care and respect. Rather than simplifying tasks for them, the choreographer is invited to adapt structures that embrace children's natural playfulness and curiosity while integrating the more developed technical or conceptual input of adult participants. This inclusive approach transforms the group into a dynamic place of mutual learning, where listening flows across generations and creative imagination is shared. Adults are encouraged to become more open and flexible, while children gain confidence and a real sense of belonging by being treated as equal contributors to the creative journey.

The choreographer plays a central, multilevel role in balancing this shared space. As a creative facilitator, they guide the flow of interaction and expression between children and adults, helping different pace, imaginations, and needs to meet and coexist. They also act as a pedagogue, attuned to the specific developmental stages of younger participants and offering structures that support focus, engagement, and collaboration. This dual sensitivity—artistic and educational—allows the choreographer to foster both expressive freedom and a sense of safety within the group.

An essential part of this role is knowing when to step in and when to step back. Sometimes, the choreographer actively engages—playing, moving, encouraging. At other times, they shift into the role of observer, allowing the group's dynamics to unfold without interference. This ability to move fluidly between action and observation supports a balance between intentional guidance and the emergence of genuine, autonomous relationships. The choreographer becomes not only a maker, but a listener, witness, and enabler of shared authorship.







In this context, co-creation with children thrives when playful, imaginative activities are part of the process in ways that sustain attention and excitement over time—especially as the group moves toward performance. The core challenge lies in maintaining a delicate balance: protecting the child's imaginative freedom while offering enough structure to shape their impulses into coherent performance material. Children often live easily in the realm of play, but may need more support in refining and composing their ideas. Helping them transition from play to performance without losing their creative spark is a central and rewarding aspect of working with young participants in multigenerational co-creation.

**TOOL:** The exercise **"Touch (warming up)"** can serve as an improvisational exercise that turns out to be a deeply intimate and multi-layered exploration – an exploration that unfolds not only through movement, but through the silent act of noticing. By guiding participants to engage first with their own bodies, then with the environment and finally with others, the tool invites an expansion of sensory and relational awareness.

**TOOL:** **"1-2-3 Freeze!"** is a simple yet dynamic game that encourages movement, attention, and interaction. Its great advantage is that it's ideal for mixed-age groups of kids and adults. The simplicity of the rules, combined with the space for improvisation and adaptation, makes it accessible and enjoyable for all ages, encouraging intergenerational play and shared fun.



04



**Leadership roles  
of the choreographer**

04



## 4.1 Responsibilities and Qualities

Even in a co-creative process, where everyone should participate in shaping the shared experience, the choreographer has a specific role. With this leadership, the choreographer has some responsibilities and should be aware of the leadership qualities needed to engage participants.

- The choreographer communicates the context, concept, and artistic objectives of the workshop. Clear directions should be given, ensuring everyone understands the ideas and steps.
- The choreographer is responsible for the creation of a safe and supportive environment for body, mind and soul. To do so, a preparational warm-up for body and mind is necessary. A choreographer must provide emotional support, helping foster trust and mutual understanding within the group.
- The choreographer should inspire and encourage participants to express and explore their creativity. For this, the choreographer provides ongoing feedback and offers reflections opportunities.
- The choreographer is the one who has an overview of the process. As a result, they are able to guide the participants through different phases of the workshop. The choreographer is responsible for managing unique group dynamics and ensuring that everyone feels included and motivated. A good leader demonstrates sensitivity, listening, and respect for diverse groups. Emotional intelligence is crucial in a collaborative environment.
- At the end of the workshop, the choreographer should lead a reflection process, allowing everyone to share their experiences and thoughts, and closing with a feedback circle.

The choreographer's ability to be critically reflective on their approach is essential for improving the quality of co-creating. This includes finding new solutions and adjusting plans if necessary. Continuous evaluation and openness to changes lead to better creative results and stronger group cohesion.

## 4.2 Co-Creation

Co-creation is a participative approach to choreography in which the choreographer and the participants jointly develop movement material, structure, and meaning. Rather than a one-directional process, co-creation invites all involved to become equal partners in an evolving artistic journey. In this process ownership is shared, which nurtures inclusivity, enhances learning and teaching dynamics, and strengthens creative bonds.

In such a setting, the choreographer remains an inspiring figure—one who proposes and catalyzes ideas—yet without imposing a fixed vision. Artistic leadership in this context is not about directing toward a predefined result, but about nurturing a space in which artistic intuition can be shared, shaped, and expanded. The chore-

ographer directs the group around evolving propositions, allowing ideas to emerge, circulate, transform, and, when needed, supporting the group in decision-making.

Beyond being a method of collaboration, co-creation holds deeper value as a practice that fosters empathy and mutual recognition. It invites participants to move beyond their personal lens and enter a space of shared perception, where the ways others think, feel, and choose are not just acknowledged but deeply considered. Through this process, acceptance of difference becomes embodied, and creative diversity is seen not as a challenge, but as a source of inspiration. Co-creation cultivates the capacity to listen—not only to ideas, but to the emotional and intuitive preferences of others—offering a space where personal perspective can soften, expand, and coexist with others'.

To allow co-creation to flourish, it is essential to remain attentive to cultural differences and individual needs. This process is not only about shaping a piece; it is also a mutual learning route. In this environment, the choreographer models openness—welcoming other ways of doing, reacting to participants' proposals, and even allowing the original idea to be reinterpreted or reinvented by others. What begins as one person's thought can become a shared creation, owned by the collective.



## 4.3 Roles of a choreographer during the process

As a choreographer, you will find yourself in various activities throughout all stages of the work: preparation, research, practice, teaching, reflecting, and implementing learnings and findings into your teaching and leadership process. The choreographer in a dance workshop holds a complex and multifaceted role. They must be able to switch between the roles of a director, a shadowing leader, a mentor and a facilitator

Each role the choreographer contributes to different aspects of the process and allows the participants to take over the lead more or less according to the situation. Having different roles in leading the group means balancing spontaneously between the one who directs and the ones who follows the idea. In this continuum of participation, the choreographer can take different roles:

### A) Director

- giving a clear direction, directing the choreographers' artistic idea
- taking decisions on the what and on the how
- taking decisions on the outcome

### B) Shadowing Leader

- incorporating the participant's view on your final decision
- transmitting artistic ideas
- being like an umbrella over the common process: having an overview over the smaller groups processes while

letting participants to go into their own ideas but still taking decisions on the outcome

- this might involve observing without intervening, showing through their presence that the choreographer values the participants' contributions

### C) Mentor

- coaching the participants within their own learning and artistic processes
- offering a clear task that the participants can explore on their own way
- providing feedback to the participants while being close to the participants' ideas
- encouraging and empowering the participants
- providing feedback and helping to nurture the participants' creativity and expression through dance

### D) Facilitator

- giving a frame that offers participants freedom to experiment and explore on their own ways
- catalysing the artistic process, giving the spark to enter the participant's processes
- gradually adding information that are following the participants' artistic ideas
- helping participants to claim ownership of their work
- helping to clarify their ideas
- organising the decision-making process for final choices about the piece



03

**Facilitation  
of creation**

05



## 5.1 Approaches to creation

### 5.1.1 The role of improvisation

Improvisation serves as the foundation for bringing individuals with varying levels of movement experience into a shared creative process. It provides the opportunity to fill a defined structure, referred to as a score in dance, with the participants' own skills and ideas. By establishing clear parameters, the resulting sequence of movements becomes repeatable and thus usable for creation. In this process, participants often take on different roles within the whole, enabling them to connect with and identify more deeply with the movement.

Specific roles within a project encourage individuals to take ownership of their contributions, fostering a stronger sense of responsibility and commitment to collective success. In improvisational tasks, it can be beneficial to have participants initially work in pairs or small groups to break down barriers. This collaborative approach allows individuals to focus on each other's bodies and movements, drawing inspiration from one another, rather than feeling isolated in their own experience. By sharing the space and ideas, participants can cultivate a supportive environment that fosters creativity and confidence.

### 5.1.2 The role of the choreographer in the creation of a piece

There might be two approaches to take the role of a choreographer in the process of building a piece that especially helps emphasizing teamwork and shared creative vision within the group. These approaches can be mixed and allow participants to be involved in the following elements of the creation process:

- shaping the meaning of movements, discussing narratives and emotions expressed by movements
- defining the movement material and quality of movement
- defining the structure of the creation, its content and order

In the sense of *Guided Freedom*, the choreographer refines pre-existing ideas. The choreographer needs to be able to see behind the first initiation of one idea and guide the participants through its evolution.

For this, the approach of the onion can help as an intentional frame for the choreographer that reaches from a simple task to more complexity. Begin with straightforward games or warm-up exercises. These initial activities set a solid foundation. Then you can add layers gradually: Introduce new tasks that build upon previous ones, much like layering an onion. For instance, participants might start with basic movements and then add qualities such as the following:

- *Meaning*: Ensuring that participants' movements align with the intended narrative or emotion.
- *Timing*: Helping participants achieve synchronisation and a natural flow in their sequences.
- *Relationships*: Facilitating meaningful connections between individual movements and group dynamics.
- *Clarity*: Assisting participants in sharpening the precision and intention of their movements.

In contrast, the approach of *Collaboration on Structure* involves the participants in the decision-making of the content and order of each section of the creation. As a choreographer, you can start with a clear vision of the elements of the performance and work together with the participants to decide the order as well as the content and meaning of each part.

The key distinction between the two lies in the balance of influence: Guided Freedom offers participants autonomy in generating material, structure and meaning within provided guidelines, while Collaboration on Structure involves participants directly in the overall composition and decision-making.



### 5.1.3 The Process – from improvisation to creation

Composition = Exploration –  
Guided Improvisation – Reproduction –  
Performance

#### Exploration

In structuring a dance composition process, the starting point might be an exploration of movement to see how the participants can move and to discover movement potential. This step sets the foundation for creativity and ensures that participants feel free to express themselves.

#### Guided Improvisation

From there, frame-giving conditions and rules can be added to evolve into a composed improvisation. This process involves blending freedom with structure, allowing participants to explore their creativity while working within defined boundaries. Through this stage, movements begin to form coherent sequences that retain spontaneity and individuality.

#### Workshop exercises as puzzle pieces of the final composition.

Beginning slowly and taking creation moments out of every little exercise of the workshop can be an effective approach to composing. Viewing every exercise in the workshop as a component of the final piece helps in mastering clear elements of composition. It's like "puzzle pieces" that create one big picture in the end. The understanding of these separated parts may contribute to increasing the confidence of the participants in the final performance and democratization of the composition process. Integrating creation moments from the very first session on, including space familiarization or establishing fixed

positions, can enable participants to perform with material developed on the first day and to motivate for every exercise following.

#### Reproduction

By repeating, consistency develops, and a sequence can be performed multiple times. Repetition is key at this stage and prepares the group for public performance or a polished presentation.

#### Performance

The culmination of the process, the performance stage, is not only about presenting the composition to an audience but also about showcasing the participants' journey. It highlights personal growth, collaboration, and the development of the choreography.

#### Small Changes Create a Performance

Even minor changes in presentation conditions, such as the location, can transform rehearsals into performances. Moving from a studio to an unconventional setting can shift the atmosphere and elevate rehearsals into a performance experience. Although spectators enhance the experience, the primary goal is the participants' development. The journey and growth of everyone involved highlight the importance of the performance over the traditional conceptualization of stage and audience.



### 5.1.4 Sources of inspiration and starting points

Instant creation can be effectively facilitated using specific tools and techniques. The following tools foster spontaneity and collaborative exploration, making them ideal for quick choreographic outcomes. They emphasize simplicity, adaptability, and collaboration, enabling participants to generate choreographic material quickly and effectively

#### Multidisciplinary art

Incorporating other art forms, such as music, poetry, or live sound, enriches the creative process by providing new dimensions of inspiration and expression. Introducing participants to various art forms fosters creative engagement and encourages them to think beyond the boundaries of movement alone. Collaboration between musicians and dancers, for example, creates a connection between the language of music and the language of dance, highlighting the intricate relationship between rhythm, melody, and movement. Tools like "Embodied Narratives" invite participants to respond physically to music, poems, or spoken text; transforming external artistic influences into deeply personal and expressive movement.

#### TOOL: "Embodied Narratives"

Exercises that encourage participants to synchronize their movements with music deepen their understanding of musicality and rhythm. This connection can be further enhanced by integrating live musicians into the creative process, offering a dynamic and interactive platform for participants to explore how sound influences their choreography. Additionally, tools like body-generated sounds; breathing, making sounds with one's voice or singing can inspire unique movements, reinforcing the synergy between auditory and physical elements.

#### TOOL: "Vocalmotion"

#### TOOL: "Voicing Movement"

#### TOOL: "Statues"

#### TOOL: "Living Painting"

#### Common everyday objects:

Objects can enrich people's imagination and help to bring participants into movement without being forced to develop the movement out of oneself. Clothing, such as hats, scarfs, coats, are related to the daily life of every participant. The normal function of the object can be presented as well as be disturbed by a playful use of it. Introducing metaphors, such as viewing a coat as an opinion or feeling rather than a physical object, deepens participants' engagement with the narrative. This method helps develop abstract thinking and symbolic movement.

#### TOOL: "Coat"

#### Game-Based Storytelling

Framing the choreography as a story or game enables participants to co-create actively. Everyday movements such as walking, greeting, and leaving serve as familiar and relatable foundations for instant creation. By repeating these actions, introducing small variations, and allowing for spontaneous interactions within the group, ordinary scenes can evolve into rich, narrative-driven stories. These transformations highlight the potential of simplicity in choreography, turning everyday gestures into meaningful and performative moments.

#### TOOL: "1-2-3 freeze"

#### TOOL: "Maestro technique"

**TOOL: "Embodied Narratives"** is a movement-based task that invites participants to interpret songs or poems as lived experiences, transforming spoken or sung text into expressive physical storytelling. This practice deepens emotional resonance and fosters inclusive, non-verbal communication through the body.

**TOOL:** Tools like **"Vocalmotion"** bring these principles to life by integrating voice, breath, and text into movement practice. It offers participants an embodied exploration of rhythm, musicality, and collaborative expression with sound and is designed to explore the use of voice in relation to movement.

**TOOL: "Voicing Movement"** is a task that explores the expressive potential of text and breath in dance. It promotes the use of poems, songs, and spoken words to investigate rhythm, pulse, and the interplay between voice and movement.

**TOOL:** The tool **"Statues"** is inviting participants to look at images of famous statues and to notice how muscle tension is used in their forms. This approach could help participants discover unexpected and yet new movements by taking inspiration from statues.

**TOOL: "Living Painting"** is taking inspiration from photography or painting. The participants are invited to create shapes in reference to the image and transform these by movements into something new.

**TOOL:** By interacting with a **"Coat"** and weaving it into a narrative, participants can generate unique and imaginative material. Objects can serve as catalysts for storytelling, creating connections and adding layers of meaning to the choreography.

**TOOL:** Games like **"1-2-3 freeze"** offer a structured framework where participants can explore movement while building relationships and narratives. These activities elicit authentic reactions and interactions, which are essential components of compelling performance.

**TOOL:** The **"Maestro technique"** allows one participant to take on the role of the leader, guiding the group in spatial movement and content. Participants can follow the leader's movements or adapt them based on their interpretations. This method promotes improvisation, collaboration, and the opportunity for participants to influence the group's direction, fostering a sense of ownership and collective creativity.

## Room & Space

Space is always a source of inspiration. The basic settings of the workshop room like the lighting, the walls or the placement of objects can inspire or shape movements.

**TOOL: "Bench"**

**TOOL: "Rooms"**

**TOOL: "Touch (warming up)"**

## Emotions/ Feelings

By incorporating tools like "Emoji" and the "Emotion Journal", participants can deepen their emotional exploration within dance co-creation workshops, using visual stimuli to inspire movement and connection to one's own feelings, ultimately enriching their expressive range and understanding of how emotions manifest through the body.

**TOOL: "Emoji"**

**TOOL: "Emojournal"**

## Restrictions

Interestingly, setting restrictions can actually foster greater creative freedom. By working within specific constraints, participants are encouraged to explore new possibilities they might not have

considered otherwise. These limitations provide structure, reducing the pressure of limitless choices and allowing creativity to emerge more organically and never-ending. A strategy to reduce complexity and set restrictions can be the limitation of movement to specific body parts, such as only using the right shoulder or the left leg. Encouraging participants to "steal" a movement or a pose from a well-known figure or from another participant and modify it with their own body can be a starting point for the creation.

**TOOL: "Statue"**

## EmoMistakes & Misunderstandings

Mistakes and misunderstandings are integral to the creative process and should be embraced as opportunities for growth. The choreographer can discuss the role of faults in art, encouraging participants to integrate "mistakes" into their work as a source of innovation and individuality. Observation also plays a critical role in fostering creativity. Teaching participants how to observe others analytically allows them to learn from their peers and apply these insights to their own movements. By providing time for reflection and discussion, participants can evaluate their contributions and understand how their unique perspectives shape the collective outcome.



**TOOL:** The tool **"Bench"** allows participants to explore movements in relation to a bench and related habitual movements. The participants can refer to the normal function of the bench, as well as transforming the object into something new.

**TOOL:** The tool **"Rooms"** offers inspiration on how to use a building as the starting point of the creation. The history, the architecture, the colours, as well as the atmosphere or the emotional resonance to the room can be used as inspiration for movement research.

**TOOL:** The tool **"Touch (warming up)"** helps participants become more attuned to the space around them by encouraging them to engage with their environment through touch. The interaction with different surfaces, whether the floor, walls, or objects, heightens spatial awareness and invites exploration of how the surrounding elements can influence and inspire movement. Through this embodied connection with space, participants begin to see their environment as a dynamic source of creative inspiration.

**TOOL:** Using emojis as inspiration can be a playful and effective way to generate movement or to add an emotional, expressive layer to one existing movement. Presenting a mood visualised by an **"Emoji"** can help to alter the quality of dance and give participants a chance to explore emotional expression.

**TOOL:** The **"Emojournal"** tool creates space for participants to express how they feel. It serves as a tool for exploring emotions, discovering their inner artist, and understanding how feelings are embodied and reflected in their dance.

**TOOL:** In the **"Statue"** exercise, the stillness of the body unlocks certain qualities to support this concept. Further, it underlines the difference in the quality when the body finally gets out of the concept to arrive in another posture. This enriches the in-between movement that is taking place, which in this concept is the essence of contemporary dance.



## 5.2 Facilitation of memorization

### 5.2.1 Co-creation of movements and scenes

Repetition plays a crucial role in memorizing choreography, much like learning a language. Utilizing participants' own steps, movements, and signs can significantly enhance body memory, making retention easier, and, at the same time, avoid language barrier. Integrating movements from other participants into these personalized steps can create phrases.

Further, the participants can create one whole scene on their own, having the choreographer as a mentor on their side. Empowering participants to co-create scenes can significantly enhance memory retention by allowing them to take ownership of the material. When individuals contribute to shaping a scene, it becomes more intuitive and meaningful for them to recall.

### 5.2.2 Oral recapitulation

Developing and inventing a unique group language and establishing vocabulary together can also facilitate memory retention. Assigning a specific word or term to each shared experience ensures that everyone understands the same concept, even if the term is linguistically unconventional. This common vocabulary fosters a sense of unity and clarity within the group. Using a common set term to refer to a specific pose or sequence creates an orientation point to recall the choreography. These terms can be symbolic but serve as anchors for recalling specific poses, move-

ments, or sequences.

Besides keywords and specific terms, introducing the concept of counting in contemporary dance, shared sound elements like a clap or specific shifts in the atmosphere offered by music, can act as an effective reminder for pivotal moments in the performance.

Building on this idea, engaging in an oral recapitulation before the performance can further support memory retention while offering the body a moment of physical rest. In this exercise, all participants gather in a circle and take turns contributing a thought or detail about what happens in the performance. In addition to this oral recapitulation, and in cases where participants do not share a common language, visualization can serve as a valuable tool to bridge communication gaps and ensure everyone remains aligned in their interpretation.

### 5.2.3 Visual aids & Visualisation

Visual aids, such as a timeline that maps out different parts of the choreography on paper, can be highly effective for memorization. This visualization helps dancers see and gain a clearer understanding of the structure and sequence of the composition. It might be helpful to also visualize formations, specific dance steps or ways of moving through space. This visualization allows them to see the flow of movements and offers an easy reference point when recalling the sequence.

## 5.3 Handing over the piece to the participants

Gradually stepping out of the leader role can significantly empower participants, fostering their confidence and independence. Initially, demonstrating movements and allowing participants to copy and then create their own, helps them become less dependent on instruction. This participatory approach might require more time, but it is essential for participants to evolve into performers. By stepping back as a leader, the choreographer gives space to the interpretation of the participants as well as allowing the participants to take ownership of the process to create a piece.

The same outcome can be reached by letting the participants step into the teacher role by transferring one's movement to another person in the group. Ideally the participant feels confident enough about their own movement material that they can teach it to the other participants. This progression allows participants to gradually ease into autonomous creation, fully embracing and owning their movement.

The language used by the choreographer and the attitude presented is already defining the first step towards an empowering environment. Reminding participants of the value of (body) expression over perfection is key to fostering confidence. Encouraging them to share stories and emphasizing the absence of a binary right or wrong helps build motivation, particularly during challenging tasks.

Before the performance, motivational guidance helps participants feel grounded and confident. Remind them to take their time, connect deeply with their dance, and focus on contrasts, spatial awareness, and relationships. Phrases like "The audience doesn't know what it's supposed to be" and "Nothing is wrong" can help alleviate anxiety. Encourage participants to view the performance as an opportunity for self-expression rather than perfection. By fostering this mindset, participants can step into the performance with confidence and authenticity.



# **FEELINGS AND ENRICHMENT OF CHOREOGRAPHERS**

## Co-creation with the population in a cultural diverse context : feelings and enrichment of choreographers

Engaging in co-creation within culturally diverse groups proved to be a deeply enriching experience—both personally and professionally—for all involved.

The following testimonies were collected from five choreographers who participated in the four workshops held in Athens, Sitia (Crete), Briançon, and Karlovac. Each of them brought a unique cultural and artistic perspective, reflecting on the challenges and transformative potential of working across difference:

Isabelle Bazin Mazuel, choreographer,  
Ascen-Danse (*France*)

Sabrina Marwa, choreographer,  
Seneca Intensiv (*Germany*)

Melita Spahić Bezjak, choreographer,  
Free Dance (*Croatia*)

Zafeiria Tsirakaki, choreographer,  
Quo Vadis (*Greece*)

Maja Drobac, choreographer,  
Free Dance (*Croatia*)

These reflections shed light on the creative, interpersonal, and methodological dimensions of co-creation in intercultural contexts, offering insights into how diversity, when embraced intentionally, can reshape both the process and the product of contemporary dance.



## Group dynamics in diversity

*-Grupna dinamika i energija koje su se izgradile u samo tri dana bile su impresivno skladne. Osjećala sam se vrlo povezano s grupom; prepoznavanje prednosti različitosti stvorilo je snažnu i toplu atmosferu dobrodošlice.*

The group dynamic and energy built in only three days was impressively flowy. I felt very much connected to the group: the recognition of the advantages of diversity created a strong welcoming atmosphere.

*- Melita, Sitia*

*-Mon expérience avec ce groupe dont la culture était différente de la mienne m'a particulièrement intrigué par la façon dont les participants se sont reliés entre eux et ont établi avec moi une relation de confiance tout au long du processus.*

Through my experience with this culturally diverse group, I found particularly intriguing the way the participants connected with each other and built trust throughout the process.

*- Isabelle, Karlovac*

*- J'étais pleine de curiosité, mais aussi d'appréhension. Après le premier échange avec le groupe, mes doutes ont rapidement disparu, alors qu'un sentiment de grande communion et de confiance entre tous les participants se faisait sentir.*

I was filled with curiosity, but also with apprehension. After the first exchange with the group, my doubts disappeared, as a strong sense of connection and trust among the group members began to emerge.

*- Isabelle, Sitia*

*-Η εσωτερική μου ηρεμία δοκιμάστηκε από την ένταση της διαδικασίας, ωστόσο η υποστήριξη μέσα από την ομάδα με βοήθησε να ξεπεράσω τις προκλήσεις, να συγκεντρωθώ και να μοιραστώ τα δημιουργικά μου εργαλεία.*

My initial calmness was tested by the intensity of the process, but the group's support helped me overcome challenges and focus and share my creative tools.

*- Zafeiria, Karlovac*

*-U društvu sudionika osjetila sam snažnu povezanost – pripadnost toj grupi potaknula je moj osobni rast i produbila zahvalnost za zajedničku energiju. Emocija koju ću ponijeti sa sobom jest osjećaj zajedništva.*

While spending time with the participants, I felt a strong sense of inclusion, truly part of the group, and grateful for the energy we shared. The collective emotion I will carry with me is a deep sense of togetherness.

*- Melita, Karlovac*

*-L'énergie du groupe m'a inspirée et m'a donné de nouvelles idées, influençant mon approche au fur et à mesure que l'atelier se déroulait.*

The group's energy inspired me and gave me new ideas, influencing my approach as the workshop progressed.

*- Isabelle, Karlovac*

*-Tijekom radionice, početno uzbuđenje preraslo je u iščekivanje, dok je radost ostala trajno prisutna. Strah od nepoznatog postupno se pretvorio u osjećaj uključenosti i angažiranosti.*

During the workshop, my initial excitement evolved into anticipation, while joy remained a constant presence. The fear of the unknown gradually transformed into a sense of engagement.

*- Melita, Karlovac*

## Creative open mindness

*-Ik kwam naar de workshop met een open-mind.*

I came into the workshop with an open mind.

*- Sabrina, Briançon*

*- Kako je radionica odmicala, strah je brzo nestao čim sam počela surađivati sa sudionicima, a radost i znatiželja rastle su i prerasle u brojne nove ideje.*

As the workshop progressed, the fear quickly disappeared once I started working with the participants, while joy and curiosity grew, evolving into many new ideas.

*- Maja, Karlovac*

*-Στο εργαστήριο βίωσα προσμονή και περιέργεια, που οδήγησαν σε νέες ιδέες και εξερεύνηση. Έμαθα τη σημασία του να ελίσσεσαι ανάμεσα στην προσαρμογή στις ανάγκες της ομάδας και στην αποδέσμευση από ιδέες που δεν λειτούργησαν.*

The workshop I experienced was marked by anticipation and curiosity leading to new ideas and exploration. I learned the importance of flexibility, adapting to the group's needs, and letting go of ideas that didn't work.

*- Zafeiria, Karlovac*



## Respecting needs

*-De behoeften van mensen respecteren – op een fysiek en een emotioneel vlak – dit is van cruciaal belang, vooral in projecten zoals deze.*

Respecting people's needs—both physical and emotional—is crucial, especially in a project like this.

*- Sabrina, Briançon*

*-Zamišljajući ponavljanje radionice, prolazim kroz spektar emocija – od sreće i radosti do tuge i brige, osobito u vezi s vremenom i nastojanjem da potrebe svih budu zadovoljene. Upravo su ti aspekti za mene predstavljali poseban izazov.*

When imagining a remake of the workshop, I experience a range of emotions — from happiness and joy to sadness and worry, especially regarding timing and ensuring everyone's needs are met, as these were my personal challenges.

*- Melita, Karlovac*



*-L'un de mes principaux défis était de trouver les bons outils créatifs et de les adapter aux différents besoins. La flexibilité était essentielle. J'ai adapté mon approche à la dynamique spécifique de chaque groupe. J'ai appris l'importance d'écouter attentivement les besoins individuels des participants, ce qui m'a permis d'adapter mon approche et de veiller à ce que l'atelier ait un sens pour toutes les personnes impliquées.*

One of my main challenges was finding the right creative tools and adapting them to different needs. Flexibility was essential. I tailored my approach to the unique dynamic of each group. I learned the importance of listening carefully to the individual needs of the participants, which allowed me to adjust my approach and ensure that the workshop was meaningful for everyone involved.

*- Isabelle, Karlovac*

*-Αντιμετώπισα αρκετές προσωπικές προκλήσεις, συμπεριλαμβανομένων τη προσαρμογή σε ένα νέο περιβάλλον και την εξισορρόπηση προσωπικών – επαγγελματικών αναγκών. Η συν-δημιουργία με μια πολιτισμικά ποικιλόμορφη ομάδα μου επέτρεψε να εμπλουτίσω τις δεξιότητες περί σεβασμού των ορίων, διαχείρισης προτεραιοτήτων, εύρεσης κοινής γλώσσας και υποστηρικτικής διάθεσης.*

I faced several personal challenges, including adjusting to a new environment, balancing personal and work needs. Co-creating with a culturally diverse group allowed me to develop skills in respecting boundaries, prioritizing, finding common language, and offering support.

*- Zafeiria, Karlovac*

## Sense of happiness

*-Sukreacija s kulturno raznolikom grupom neizbježno donosi različitost kao snagu, potičući otvorenost, nova otkrića i učenja za sve sudionike. Ono zahtijeva razvoj strpljenja, razumijevanja, uvažavanja i suosjećanja. Inspiraciju je potaknula ideja sukreacije i pronalaženje zajedničkih sjećanja na snove i igre iz djetinjstva, što je dovelo do snažnog osjećaja zadovoljstva i sreće kroz čin plesa.*

Co-creating with a culturally diverse group necessarily brings diversity as a strength, fostering openness and new discoveries and learnings for everyone ; this requires one to develop patience, understanding, appreciation and compassion. The inspiration was driven by the idea of co-creation, and finding shared memories of dreams and childhood games, leading to a strong sense of pleasure and happiness in the action of dancing.

*- Melita, Sitia*

*-Het is gemakkelijk om te denken dat pushen voor meer tijd, meer intensiteit of meer output leidt tot betere resultaten, terwijl in de realiteit, plezier en genot essentieel. De ervaring liet me zien dat het creëren van een ondersteunende, plezierige omgeving misschien nog wel belangrijker is dan het artistieke werk zelf. Als mensen zich gerespecteerd en gekoesterd voelen, kunnen ze meer van zichzelf geven en dat leidt tot een rijker, betekenisvoller proces.*

It's easy to think that pushing for more time, more intensity, or more output leads to better results, but in reality, fun and enjoyment are essential. The experience showed me that creating a supportive, enjoyable environment is perhaps even more important than the artistic work itself. When people feel respected and cared for, they can give more of themselves, and that leads to a richer, more meaningful process overall.

*- Sabrina, Briançon*





# Language dynamics

*-Dankzij de workshop heb ik drie belangrijke punten ontdekt:*

- Taal is niet zo belangrijk. Duidelijke communicatie kan ook zonder perfecte taalvaardigheden. Maar wees geduldig.*
- Een beeld zegt meer dan duizend woorden. Visuele hulpmiddelen kunnen ideeën effectiever overbrengen dan lange uitleg.*
- Bewegen en aanraken is normaal als je niet dezelfde taal spreekt. Fysieke interactie kan de communicatiekloof overbruggen.*

Thanks to the workshop, I discovered three vital points:

- Language is not that important. Clear communication can happen without perfect language skills. But be patient.
- A picture speaks a thousand words. Visual aids can convey ideas more effectively than lengthy explanations.
- Moving and touching is normal when one doesn't speak the same language. Physical interaction can bridge the communication gap.

*- Sabrina, Athens*

*-Si j'avais d'abord pensé que la diversité linguistique serait un obstacle, je me suis vite rendu compte que la barrière de la langue ne représentait pas un véritable défi, car très rapidement et naturellement, d'autres modes de communication se sont établis. En effet, tout le monde a fait preuve d'une grande volonté de communiquer, sans aucun jugement, ce qui a permis à chacun de se sentir à l'aise et de*

*réellement s'engager dans le processus.*

While I initially thought that linguistic diversity would be an obstacle, I quickly realized that the language barrier was not a real challenge, as other modes of communication naturally and rapidly emerged. Indeed, everyone showed a strong willingness to communicate without any judgment, which allowed each person to feel comfortable and truly engage in the process.

*- Isabelle, Sitia*

*-Er was een verschuiving in de taal. Wat het vocabulaire- of grammatica niveau ook is, ik ontdekte dat het beter is om slechts één "werktaal" te gebruiken, dat wil zeggen één taal die door de deelnemers en choreografen is gekozen en waarin we allemaal zo goed mogelijk proberen te werken om te voorkomen dat we te veel van taal wisselen en afhankelijk worden van taal (Als de ene deelnemer bijvoorbeeld Frans spreekt en de andere Duits, zou Engels een werktaal kunnen zijn, op deze manier is het voor beiden niet in de moedertaal en vertrouwen de deelnemers op bewegingen/spreken met handen en voeten om zichzelf uit te drukken in plaats van te proberen het juiste woord te vinden. Hierdoor zijn ze dan ook sneller in hun lichaam en dichtbij beweging).*

There was a shift in language. Whatever the vocabulary or grammar level is, I discovered that the best is just to take one "work language", meaning one chosen language by participants and choreographers ; we all try to work in the best we can to avoid too much swapping in language and becoming dependent on language. This has two reasons: first, translation takes a lot of time, and secondly, more than half of the group (who are not speaking the translated language) are excluded, and all are out of the body for the moment. (For example,

when one participant speaks French and the other German, English could be a work language, this way it's for both not in their mother tongue and the participants will rely on movements / speaking with hands and feet to explain themselves rather than trying to find the exact right word. This will get them faster in their bodies and closer to movement.)

- *Sabrina, Briançon*

*Promatrajući što sudionici nude, pronašli smo zajednički jezik kroz njihove pokrete.*

By observing what the participants had to offer, we discovered a shared language through their movements. - *Melita, Karlovac*

## Richness of diversity

*-Co-cr  er avec un groupe de culture diff  rente apporte une grande vari  t   de qualit   de danse, ainsi qu'une richesse unique de propositions, tout en prouvant l'importance et la force de la communication non verbale. Ce processus est tr  s enrichissant pour le chor  graphe.*

Co-creating with a group from a different culture brings a wide variety of dance qualities, as well as a unique richness of ideas, while demonstrating the importance and power of non-verbal communication. This process is highly enriching for the choreographer.

- *Isabelle, Sitia*

*-La diversit   de la qualit   de la danse   tait l'un des aspects les plus int  ressants de la co-cr  ation avec un groupe d'une autre culture. La richesse des compositions m'a conduit    d  velopper un v  ritable accompagnement en tant que chor  graphe.*

The diversity in the quality of the dance was one of the most interesting aspects of co-creating with a group from another culture. The richness of the compositions led me to develop a truly supportive role as a choreographer.

- *Isabelle, Brian  on*

*-Ik ervaarde dat door een cultureel rijk referentiepunt te bieden, ik daarmee de deelnemers in staat stelde om creatief bezig te zijn terwijl ze inspiratie haalden uit historische en culturele artefacten. De mix van culturele fijngevoeligheid, betrokkenheid en creativiteit verrijkte het choreografisch proces.*

I could experience that by providing a culturally rich reference point, I was allowing participants to engage creatively while drawing inspiration from historical and cultural artifacts. The blend of cultural sensitivity and creativity enriched the choreographic process.

- *Sabrina, Athens*

# Emotion management

*-Ik ervaarde dat het observeren van een groep en het kunnen aanpassen aan hun behoeften, kan betekenen dat de choreograaf balans moet vinden tussen luisteren en begeleiden tijdens het proces met betrekking tot het energieniveau van de groep en nog steeds met het algemene doel voor ogen. Als bijvoorbeeld één emotie te veel overheerst, kan het zijn dat de choreograaf niet in staat is om het gestelde doel te bereiken en dat zij dit moet herkennen en de sfeer zodanig om te buigen dat mensen uit de overheersende emotie worden gestimuleerd.*

I experienced that observing a group and being able to adapt to their needs, can mean that the choreographer balances listening and guiding through the process regarding the energy level of the group still with the overall aim in mind. For example, if one emotion is taking over too much, the choreographer might not be able to reach the set goal and needs to recognise it and shift the atmosphere, encouraging people out of the overtaking emotion.

*- Sabrina, Briançon*

*-Μπόρεσα να παρατηρήσω την επίδραση των συναισθημάτων μου στη δυναμική της ομάδας και πώς μπορώ να λειτουργήσω υποστηρικτικά ώστε οι άλλοι να αισθάνονται ασφαλείς στο να εκφραστούν ελεύθερα.*

I could observe the influence of my emotions on the group dynamic and how I can be a supporter to help the others feel safe to express themselves.

*- Zafeiria, Karlovac*

*Zadaci kretanja pobudili su duboke emocije i potaknuli osjećaj uvažavanja i zahvalnosti, osobito zahvaljujući aktivnom sudjelovanju sudionika.*

Movement tasks stirred deep emotions, fostering a sense of appreciation and gratitude, particularly due to the active involvement of the participants.

*- Melita, Karlovac*

# Time management

*-Wanneer ik me een remake van deze workshop voorstel, heb ik het gevoel dat het een halve dag of dag langer had moeten duren.*

When I imagine a remake of this workshop, I feel it would have needed an extra half a day or day more time.

*- Sabrina, Briançon*

*-Η διαχείριση του χρόνου ήταν μία από τις βασικές μου προκλήσεις.*

*- Upravljanje vremenom bio je jedan od mojih glavnih izazova.*

- Managing time was one of my main challenges.

*- Zafeiria and Melita, Karlovac*

*-Radionica mi je dala mnogo energije i snage za dalje. Predstava je imala izražen sentimentalni i nostalgичni prizvuk, što sam posebno cijenila, osobito jer je nastala u samo tri dana, a sudionici su zajedno s koreografima uspjeli probuditi tako snažne emocije. Kad bih ovu radionicu usporedila sa snom, nazvala bih je 'Nedovršeni snovi'. Kada bih zamišljala ponavljanje ovakve radionice, voljela bih da se nastavi.*

The workshop gave me a lot of energy and strength to continue. The performance had a certain sentimental and nostalgic feel, which I appreciated, given it was completed in just three days, and the participants, alongside the choreographers, managed to evoke such strong emotions. If this workshop were a dream, I would name it "Unfinished Dreams." If I imagined a remake of this type of workshop, I would love to see it continue.

*- Maja, Karlovac*



## Growth and creativity

*-Cet atelier a été pour moi un voyage d'exploration et de créativité. J'ai commencé avec enthousiasme, impatiente de voir comment les participants allaient s'engager dans les outils créatifs que je leur proposais. J'ai été agréablement surprise par leur vif intérêt et la rapidité avec laquelle ils ont adopté l'outil que je leur proposais pour une exploration créative, renforçant ainsi ma conviction de son efficacité.*

This workshop was a journey of exploration and creativity for me. I began with enthusiasm, eager to see how the participants would engage with the creative tools I was offering. I was pleasantly surprised by the participants' keen interest and the speed with which they embraced the tool I introduced for creative exploration, further reinforcing my belief in its effectiveness.

*- Isabelle, Karlovac*

*-Η εμπειρία μου ενίσχυσε την εσωτερική μου πεποίθησή για τη σημασία της καλλιτεχνικής δημιουργίας. Αυτό το εργαστήριο αποτέλεσε μέρος μιας συνεχούς εξέλιξης στην πορεία τόσο της προσωπικής όσο και της επαγγελματικής μου ζωής.*

My experience reinforced my belief in the importance of creativity. This workshop was part of a continuous journey of personal and professional growth.

*- Zafeiria, Karlovac*



# **IMPACT ON THE POPULATION**

## Co-creation with the population in a cultural diverse context : impact on the population

The participants had the opportunity to share their feedback through a questionnaire, reflecting on what being involved in co-creation and choreographic work had brought to them, as well as their emotional experiences during the process. The questionnaire also explored how the experience had impacted their imagination and self-expression. This was supplemented by emotion-sharing sessions and discussion groups. Overall, the experience was highly valued, with most participants expressing a strong desire to continue the process.

### WELL BEING FEELINGS

The feedback forms revealed a shared emotional landscape among participants, with recurring experiences of joy, inspiration, liberation, playfulness, interest, excitement, and freedom. Participants described themselves as feeling relaxed, calm, connected, and grounded.

- *Sitia*

The playful nature of the workshop was particularly appreciated. It was regarded as an ideal way to close out the week, bringing a sense of lightness and enjoyment. Participants reported an emotional shift—from sadness, uncertainty, and confusion to feelings of relaxation, happiness, and excitement. The experience was widely described as unique, positive, caring, and even miraculous, with a strong emphasis on energy and freedom. Frequently mentioned emotions included happiness, fulfilment, belonging, freedom, peace, love, exhilaration, excitement, trust, satisfaction, and curiosity.

- *Karlovac*

Participants experienced a range of powerful emotions throughout the workshop—moving from initial skepticism and surprise to excitement, and ultimately to feelings of joy, peace, and love.

*-Briançon*

The workshop was described using terms such as inspiring, educational, pleasant, incredible, kind, fun, valuable, and harmonious.

*- Athens*

## **GAIN OF SELF-CONFIDENCE**

The participants shared that they faced specific challenges during the workshop, such as the fear of communicating and cooperating with others, doubts about their physical or mental capacities, and the fear of failing to connect with themselves. However, each of them appeared to gradually transform these fears over the course of the process, ultimately embracing the idea of self-exploration and collective performance. Overall, the participants were highly engaged in the workshop and the co-creation process. They overcame their initial difficulties and all reported a positive emotional shift—from feeling uncomfortable and disconnected from their bodies and from others, to feeling a deeper connection with themselves and the group, accompanied by a clear increase in self-confidence, made possible through a strong and open group dynamic.

*- Sitia*

## **GAIN OF OPEN MINDNESS AND CONNECTION TO OTHERS**

Engaging in this process allowed participants to practice in an unfamiliar environment with new people.

*-Athens*

Participants were inspired by the openness of others, recognising the beauty in those willing to connect, share, and show vulnerability. The experience was perceived as an opportunity to bond and grow together in a supportive environment. It reminded participants of the joy and fulfilment that arises from relating to others through shared creative expression. Harmony within the group, along with a sense of musicality and love that permeated the process, were recurring themes. Participants felt that the group's collective spirit, guided by the music, created an atmosphere of unity and connection.

*- Karlovac*

Participants greatly appreciated the opportunity to share imaginaries within a context of cultural, generational, and energetic diversity. They felt nourished and inspired by what each individual contributed to the group, and expressed a desire for even more cultural diversity in future workshops.

*- Briançon*

## SELF-EXPRESSION OPPORTUNITY

Participants expressed that the co-creation process allowed them to pursue personal goals and explore self-expression through movement, even though some initially found it challenging. Over time, feelings of shame subsided, fostering a sense of safety that enabled participants to express themselves more freely and build trust in the process. The successful completion of creative tasks and the emotional impact of the practice further enhanced their sense of inspiration and accomplishment.

-Athens

The emotional spectrum revealed the depth of engagement and personal exploration that unfolded throughout the day. A common sentiment was the feeling of being accepted and encouraged, with many participants pleasantly surprised by how open they felt in expressing themselves. Contemporary dance was recognised as a medium for self-exploration across various life situations. One participant noted that, unlike salsa—where one leads and the other follows—contemporary dance offers more fluid and interpretative connections.

- Karlovac



## LANGUAGE BARRIER

Engaging in this process allowed participants to overcome language barriers, fostering connection beyond words.

- Athens

For some, the language barrier was the primary challenge; however, many appreciated the support they received through translation. One participant even noted that this linguistic difference made them more attentive and receptive to what others shared.

- Briançon

## SENSE OF BELONGING

During the experience, participants expressed a profound sense of connection—with both themselves and others. A strong feeling of belonging and community emerged throughout the process. One participant visiting from Slovenia shared that, despite it being her first time meeting the group, she felt an immediate bond.

- Karlovac

Participants highlighted that practicing contemporary dance, combined with affirming feedback, made them feel accomplished and fully integrated into the group.

- Athens

A shared energy between the choreographer, participants, and musicians stood out as a defining element of the experience. The fusion of each person's input and impulses became the heart of the creative process, where individual energies blended to form a powerful collective expression.

- Karlovac



## A FIRST APPROACH TO CO-CREATION

One participant deeply appreciated being introduced to the culture of contemporary dance, which she hadn't experienced before.

- *Briançon*

Participants offered detailed feedback on their involvement in the co-creation and choreographic work, noting both the challenges faced and the positive impacts they felt.

- *Sitia*

The value of the creative process was widely acknowledged, with many participants highlighting the rewarding experience of collaboration and collective artistry. The opportunity to co-create with others had a lasting impact on their perception of creativity within a group context. Participants expressed profound gratitude for this unique multicultural opportunity, where they felt encouraged to open up and explore new ideas. The entire group was motivated by the diverse contributions and creative exchanges that shaped the process.

- *Karlovac*

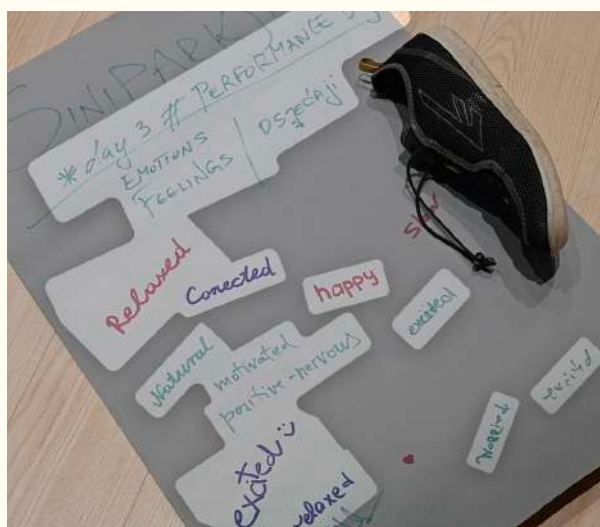


In Briançon, where the freedom of creation was pushed to its limits, the feedback about the space provided for creative liberty was mixed. Some appreciated having time to create independently, while others wished for a more structured approach.

- *Briançon*

Participants who responded to the question about co-creation on the form stated that they had "contributed some ideas, which the choreographers included in the performance."

- *Sitia*



## AN EXPERIENCE TO BE CONTINUED

All participants found this experience important and expressed a desire to participate again.

- *Sitia*

Those involved felt grateful for the opportunity to engage with contemporary dance and were excited to contribute to the co-creation process. Despite experiencing fatigue and initial fear of exposure, the workshop left them motivated and eager to continue exploring this form of expression.

- *Athens*

The process sparked a personal desire to delve deeper into dance and its potential for exploration. This reflects the sense of empowerment felt by participants to continue discovering and expanding their creative boundaries. The experience brought smiles to their faces, deepened their gratitude for life, and left them wishing for more opportunities to continue dancing.

- *Karlovac*

## FEEDBACKS ABOUT PERFORMING

The final performance was appreciated, as participants enjoyed showing what they had created and seeing what others had created. However, the performance context was noted as stressful. In Briançon, after the first performance, participants felt either incapable and insecure, empty, or liberated and proud. After the second performance, they primarily felt happiness, pride, confidence, importance, inspiration, ecstasy, and exhaustion.

- *Briançon*

Participants described the performance experience as wonderful and deeply connecting. Many emphasised how impressive it was to successfully create and present the entire performance within just three days. Working with renowned dancers and mentors was highlighted as a truly unique opportunity. Despite initial nervousness and stage fright, these feelings dissipated during the performance, allowing participants to fully engage in the moment. Overall, they felt proud of the collaborative process and the outcome on stage.

- *Karlovac*



**CO-CREATION IN  
CONTEMPORARY DANCE:  
EMBRACING CULTURAL  
DIVERSITY AS A STRENGTH**

Across all four workshops (Athens, Sitia, Briançon, Karlovac), participants' cultural backgrounds were not only acknowledged but actively celebrated. Diversity was embraced as a vital and enriching element of the creative process, serving as a catalyst for dialogue, imagination, and shared expression.

## **Cultural awareness and adaptation:**

The practices were adapted to consider the different cultural backgrounds of the participants and to allow them to remain connected to their identity. It was important for the choreographers to consider issues such as respect for different relationships to physical contact, thus ensuring respectful practice, inclusivity, and personal comfort.

In Athens, participants came from diverse cultural backgrounds with differing comfort levels around physical touch. Choreographers adjusted their practice and creatively integrated these adjustments into the performance. For instance, the use of space between participants was strategically managed to respect cultural sensitivities regarding personal space while enhancing artistic expression. Such adaptations added a unique and meaningful dimension to the choreography. Culturally and religiously significant clothing was respected and preserved during the performance, reinforcing a sense of personal identity.

Cultural habits related to gestures and body language were also explored, respected, and used as a creative resource.



## Shared artistic references and local culture:

Incorporating local and shared cultural elements helped participants find common ground and inspired the creative process.

In Athens, the practice thoughtfully integrated the diverse cultural influences of the participants. Some expressed a desire to enter the state of dance through traditional Chinese dance, urban dance forms, and spiritual dances, which was welcomed by the choreographer. Given the highly diverse nature of the group, ancient Greek culture was used as a common reference point, providing a unifying theme that resonated with everyone in their current location. This approach allowed participants to

bring their unique cultural backgrounds into the practice while finding common ground through the shared exploration of Greek cultural elements. The blend of diverse dance traditions with a common cultural theme enriched the overall practice and performance, fostering a sense of unity and mutual respect.

In Briançon, during the exploration of the theatre rooms, participants shared imaginaries related to these spaces—expressed through verbal or bodily communication—drawing on their varied life experiences, some of which were culturally influenced.



Moreover, with mountain culture omnipresent in Briançon—a small town nestled among towering peaks—participants were encouraged to view the mountainous landscape as a source of creative inspiration. This environment, familiar to some, served as a distinct cultural marker, contrasting with the frame of reference of participants from flatter regions.

Throughout the workshop in Karlovac, elements such as song, poetry, celebratory gatherings, rhythmic music, and a playful spirit were central to shaping the creative atmosphere. The processes of co-creation, sharing, exploration, and investigation of familiar rhythms and poems encouraged participants to engage deeply and brought a delightful sense of playfulness to the experience. This blending of artistic forms and collaborative inquiry fostered an environment where creativity could flourish, enabling participants to connect both with the material and with one another on a meaningful level.

## **Personal Expression through cultural memory (i.e intangible heritage)**

Childhood games, native languages, ways of greeting, personal dreams, and stories served as creative material, helping participants feel seen and heard. This personal and cultural input enriched the choreography with emotional depth and authenticity.

In Sitia, choreographers engaged participants by using their personal backgrounds and collective diversity as a source of strength in the creative process. Recalling childhood games, incorporating different languages and body expressions (such as greeting gestures), and weaving dreams into the creation helped build a safe space where participants could flourish and gain confidence through their differences. Inviting participants to draw on their memories, identities, and aspirations during the creative process proved to be an effective strategy for co-creation in this specific setting. Cultural differences, which might have initially appeared as barriers, gradually dissolved during the creative process, becoming elements of togetherness. Indeed, channelling individuals' dreams and hopes within a creative framework reveals the shared aspects of human nature, turning perceived obstacles into tools, and ultimately into a collective strength for the group.

In Karlovac, each participant brought their own intimate understanding of the movement tasks, infusing personal cultural references into the work. These individual contributions, whether expressed through movement styles or storytelling, enriched the overall concept and final performance, adding layers of meaning and depth.

## Communication Beyond Language

Language barriers became creative opportunities. Non-verbal communication and body language, supported by trust- and relaxation-building exercises like blind walks and games, enabled deeper connections and fostered collaboration across cultural and linguistic divides.

In Briançon, the language barrier was perceived somewhat as a strength, encouraging participants to be more attentive to what others expressed nonverbally. This led some to enter more quickly into a state of body language and dance creation.

In Karlovac, language barriers were occasionally overcome through translation of instructions, making the co-creation process and collaborative approach adaptable to participants from diverse backgrounds. This effort was further supported by the organisational team, who ensured effective communication and inclusivity throughout the workshop.

In Sitia, the predominant use of body language, combined with an atmosphere of playful creativity and light-hearted interaction, proved to be relevant approaches when aiming to co-create in this specific setting.

In Athens, the use of gestures and research into common body languages and global meanings facilitated effective communication and collaboration across diverse cultural backgrounds. Cultural differences in gender relations were respected.

## Democratic and Trustful Spaces

Co-creation with the population thrives in inclusive environments where emotions are welcome and an egalitarian, fluid structure is created, fostering equal participation. Participants are empowered to propose ideas, reflect critically, and actively shape the artistic outcome, fostering a strong sense of ownership and shared purpose.

In Sitia, a safe and democratic space was cultivated through collective decision-making and playful experimentation. Participants were encouraged to voice their feelings and ideas freely, and this emotional openness generated a strong group dynamic.

In Karlovac, the choreographic process embraced shared authorship, with participants influencing the themes, movements, and even the structure of the performance. This collaborative spirit nurtured a deep sense of belonging and co-ownership.

In Briançon, differences in expectations around structure and time management were expressed in the feedback, some participants were more accustomed to clearly defined instructions and strict scheduling, while others were more familiar with open-ended and flexible methods. To address this, the facilitators created a balance between structured guidance and space for creative exploration, allowing everyone to engage meaningfully and comfortably.

When cultural diversity is embraced with care and creativity, it profoundly enriches the co-creation process in contemporary dance. It transforms difference into connection, and individual experience into collective expression—allowing contemporary dance to become a space of dialogue, belonging, and shared imagination.



## In conclusion

The workshops held across Athens, Sitia, Briançon, and Karlovac revealed that cultural diversity, when acknowledged and embraced, does not hinder but rather amplifies the potential of artistic collaboration. It becomes a catalyst for innovation, empathy, and mutual growth. In these settings, co-creation was not simply a method—it was a dynamic, living process shaped by the interplay of languages, values, traditions, and personal memories.

Cultural diversity was consistently recognised as a creative strength. Choreographers adapted their practices with care and openness to respect participants' varied backgrounds, including differing approaches to physical contact, clothing, gender expression, time management, personal space, and emotional vulnerability. These adaptations not only fostered inclusivity but also enriched the choreographic process, enabling participants to remain authentically connected to their identities while engaging in a shared creative endeavour.

Participants brought a wide spectrum of embodied knowledge—from traditional dances and gestures of greeting to personal stories, dreams, and ways of moving shaped by age, geography, and culture. Rather than viewing difference as an obstacle, the workshops explored it as an artistic tool. Language barriers, for instance, were reframed as opportunities for embodied listening and intuitive connection. In the absence of a shared verbal code, participants turned to non-verbal communication—body language, attentive gesture, affective expression, and moments of collective play. These alternative modes deepened interpersonal connection and enriched the choreographic process with unexpected textures and meanings.

Local cultures and shared artistic references served as sources of inspiration and common ground. In Athens, ancient Greek culture offered a symbolic framework for a group composed of diverse nationalities and dance traditions. In Briançon, the mountainous landscape and spatial exploration of the theatre encouraged shared imaginaries linked to architecture, landscape, and memory. In Karlovac, the



creative process was infused with songs, poetry, festive rituals, and a sense of collective joy. In Sitia, personal memories and heritage shaped the artistic work, transforming individual experiences into shared creation.

Personal stories, childhood games, gestures, and native languages became vital tools of expression, helping to bridge linguistic divides and enabling deeper collaboration across cultures. Playful exercises and a relaxed, trusting atmosphere supported this connection, allowing participants to contribute meaningfully regardless of their language background.

Spaces of co-creation were most effective when structured around egalitarian and fluid dynamics. Hierarchies were not abolished but transformed into circular, responsive relationships. Choreographers acted as facilitators rather than directors, enabling participants to shape not only the content but the very structure of the artistic outcome.

This approach fostered trust, ownership, emotional openness, and a genuine sense of belonging.

Ultimately, the experience of co-creation under these multicultural conditions affirmed a powerful truth: that art—particularly contemporary dance—has the capacity to transform diversity into dialogue, and difference into shared imagination. By inviting participants to draw from their cultural memory and contribute as equals, the process became not just inclusive but transformative. Contemporary dance, in this light, emerged as a space for collective meaning-making—one that reflects the plurality of our times while honouring the uniqueness of every voice and body within it.



## To go further

As a result of these conclusions, the video training kit has been developed based on several key ideas:

Contact between participants as a source of movement creation and self-expression, with added value for group cohesion:

- Exploring physical contact in continuity with the fundamentals of contemporary dance
- Using indirect contact to avoid physical touch while exploring alternative forms of connection

Movement creation, inspiration, and creative expression drawn from everyday references:

- Incorporating daily gestures
- Expressing through emotions
- Engaging with everyday spaces

Movement creation, inspiration, and creative expression drawn from shared or diverse cultural references:

- Drawing on artistic references
- Exploring collective memory (i.e. intangible cultural heritage)
- Using common cultural objects

In addition, the video training kit includes:

Choreographers' feedback and perspectives:

- Insights into the fundamentals of contemporary dance
- Reflections from each choreographer on their experience, including how it impacted and enriched them personally

Participants' feedback on their experience:

- Reflections on their feelings following the experience
- Thoughts on the creative opportunity, how it met their expectations, and the personal changes it brought about

Also visit:

**[Siniparksi training kit blog](#)**

**[Siniparksi YouTube channel](#)**

# WHO WE ARE

# Siniparksi

The SINIPARKSI European exchange project was designed to make contemporary dance accessible to a wide audience while actively embracing the cultural diversity of communities across Europe. Recognizing the need for choreographers and dance educators to be better prepared to address human and social diversity, the project focused on developing inclusive training opportunities. Led by four European dance institutions based in France, Greece, Germany and Croatia, SINIPARKSI provided choreographers with a platform to exchange ideas on the potential, practices, and challenges of cultural diversity in choreographic creation. Through a co-creation approach with local communities, involving both novice and experienced dancers, artists were able to broaden their perspectives, refine their methodologies, and transform dance into a truly inclusive space.

## People:

### ARTISTIC DIRECTION / CHOREOGRAPHY

**Isabelle Bazin Mazuel** – Choreographer /  
Dance pedagogue

*(Founder / Director of **Ascen-Danse**)*

**Sabrina Marwa** – Choreographer /  
Dance pedagogue

***Seneca Intensiv***

**Melita Spahić Bezjak** – Choreographer /  
Dance Educator / Artistic Director

*(Founder of **Free Dance**)*

**Zafeiria Tsirakaki** – Choreographer / Dance  
Teacher / Dancer

*(Founder / Director of **Quo Vadis**)*



## WORKSHOP SUPPORT / VOLUNTEERS

**Maja Drobac** – Collaborating Choreographer  
*Free Dance*

**Nikola Crnković** – Collaborating Musician  
*Free Dance*

**Robert Pavlić** – Collaborating Light Designer  
*Free Dance*

**Cyrielle Mensier** – Volunteer assistant  
*Quo Vadis*

**Sanja Radić** – Volunteer Assistant  
*Free Dance*

## PRODUCTION & COORDINATION

**Anne Bouchon** – Project Leader and Project Manager for *Ascen-Danse*  
(Founder / Director of *Cultures Eco-Actives*)

**Melita Spahić Bezjak** – Project Manager for  
*Free Dance*

**Zafeiria Tsirakaki** – Project Manager for  
*Quo Vadis*

**Juliane Wabnitz** – Documentation & Executive Coordinator for *Seneca Intensiv*

**Ivana Francišković Olrom** – Communication Manager (Co-founder, *Free Dance*)

**Alma Jerinić** – Administrator and Production Coordinator (Co-founder, *Free Dance*)

**Marina Sasli** – Back office assistant  
*Quo Vadis*

**Christos Santa Maria** – Assistant  
*Quo Vadis*

**Camille Foucault** – Communication  
*Cultures Eco Actives*

## MEDIA & DOCUMENTATION

**Orestis Alexiadis** – Photographer  
*Quo Vadis*

**Miran Barjaković** – Videographer  
*Free Dance*

**Nikos Galanogiorgos** – Web Developer / Blog Designer  
*Quo Vadis*

**Inga Groß** – Video Editor & Photographer  
(Co-Founder of *Seneca Intensiv*)

**Eirini Katsaraki** – Graphic Designer  
*Quo Vadis*

**Denis Stošić** – Photographer  
*Free Dance*

## CONCEPT & NETWORK

**Pablo Volo** *Seneca Intensiv*

**Anne Bouchon** *Cultures Eco-Actives* and *Ascen-Danse*

**Zafeiria Tsirakaki** *Quo Vadis*

**Melita Spahić Bezjak** *Free Dance*



## ASCEN-DANSE

ASCEN-DANSE was established on July 18, 1996, and is based in Mont-Dauphin, France. It includes a dance school, founded in 1996 under the direction of Isabelle Bazin Mazuel, a professional dance company, Compagnie Isabelle Mazuel, and the organization of the renowned "Vertical'été" dance festival, held in a UNESCO World Heritage site since 2006. Isabelle Bazin Mazuel teaches contemporary dance from Briançon to Embrun. In collaboration with the local Dance Federation, she co-creates performances with amateur dancers of all levels. She and her company also conduct workshops for children ("Trop la Classe") and in retirement homes. The company also performs site-specific shows and conducts workshops with the local community.

ASCEN-DANSE is widely recognized for hosting artistic organizations during the "Vertical'été" festival, which celebrated its 15th anniversary in 2023.

More Info: [ascen-danse-05.webnode.fr](http://ascen-danse-05.webnode.fr)



## QUO VADIS

QUO VADIS is a dance company founded by Zafeiria Tsirakaki in 2017. The name "Quo Vadis" translates to "Where are you going?", a fundamental question that, alongside "Who are you?", explores the concept of identity, both personally and collectively. It reflects a journey, suggesting a direction toward discovery. Understanding oneself is just as crucial as knowing the path to that discovery. Through embodied research and interdisciplinary creation, Quo Vadis aims to make the arts accessible to a wider audience, creating performances that merge movement, imagery, and narrative to provoke thought and emotional resonance.

Since its founding, Quo Vadis has developed original works through collaborative and interdisciplinary processes, blending dance with text, sound, and site-responsive practices, often drawing from mythology, socio-political landscapes, and lived experience. Since its founding, Quo Vadis has received support from major institutions such as the Greek Ministry of Culture and the Region of Crete. Their work has been presented in site-specific locations, black box theatres, and alternative spaces, always seeking to create meaningful encounters between artists, audiences, and the world around them.

More Info: [quovadisdancecompany.com](http://quovadisdancecompany.com)



## SENECA INTENSIV

SENECA INTENSIV (SI) is an educational institution based in Berlin, Germany, specialized in artistic movement. Its core objective is to embed artistic movement as an essential part of society.

SI offers intensive programs in dance, circus and physical theatre, as well as in dance education and choreography for a wide spectrum of participants. The programs attract people, ranging from seasoned dancers and stage performers to newcomers exploring the world of dance, acrobatics, performance and creation. In order to further promote the potential of trained participants, Company SI was founded, which develops performances for local stages. SI's spacious studios are located in the post-industrial district of Marzahn and provide an inclusive space that welcomes a broad audience.

Among SI's distinguished faculty is Sabrina Marwa, an experienced dance teacher and choreographer, who brings expertise in contemporary dance and pedagogy and has worked with the students of the intensive programs, in school projects and with Company SI.

More Info: [seneca-intensiv.de](https://seneca-intensiv.de)



## FREE DANCE

Centre for Dance and Performing Arts F.R.E.E. D.A.N.C.E is an independent, non-profit organisation founded in 2004 by choreographer and educator Melita Spašić Bezjak. Based in Karlovac, Croatia, Free Dance brings together artists and professionals to advance contemporary dance through education, production, and artistic research. Actively shaping both the local and national dance scene for over two decades, the organisation fosters innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and audience engagement. It approaches contemporary dance as an evolving ecosystem—a space for embodied expression, critical reflection, and artistic inquiry.

Its programs encompass artistic research, performances, residencies, education, and public presentations, with a strong emphasis on working with children and young people.

Free Dance supports the growth of an independent cultural scene, bridging dance with broader social and artistic contexts. Since 2011, it has organised the Karlovac Dance Festival (KDF)—a platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and cultural enrichment within the community.

Through inclusive, participatory practices, Free Dance invites audiences—particularly younger generations—to engage as active viewers and co-creators, strengthening the visibility, relevance, and accessibility of contemporary performing arts.

More Info: [freedance.hr](https://freedance.hr)



## CULTURES ECO-ACTIVES

Cultures Eco Actives is an association for cultural cooperation and innovation. It believes in the role of culture and art to increase respect for oneself, others, nature and the planet.

It promotes cultural rights and inclusive artistic practices, while investigating cultural contexts. The initiative provides local artists with an opportunity to work and enhance their creative process. It offers the population of the territory an opening to Europe. It facilitates environmental responsibility and proposes reconnection to nature.

The actions of Cultures Eco Actives are an opportunity to share experiences and know-how specific to as many people as possible.

More Info: [cultures-ecoactives.fr](http://cultures-ecoactives.fr)

# Local financial partners

## Quo Vadis

The Region of Crete has consistently supported cultural expression and community empowerment across the island. With a strong commitment to both heritage and innovation, the Region plays a key role in promoting inclusive artistic practices.



**ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑ ΚΡΗΤΗΣ**  
REGION OF CRETE

In August 2024, the Region of Crete provided financial support to *Quo Vadis Dance Company* for the realization of a co-creation workshop in Sitia. The workshop was part of the European program *Siniparksi-taking care of population through contemporary dance* and engaged local and international participants in collaborative artistic research focused on cultural sustainability.

Η **Περιφέρεια Κρήτης** υποστηρίζει σταθερά την πολιτιστική έκφραση και την ενδυνάμωση των κοινοτήτων σε όλο το νησί. Με διαρκή προσήλωση τόσο στην παράδοση όσο και στην καινοτομία, διαδραματίζει καθοριστικό ρόλο στην προώθηση συμμετοχικών και συμπεριληπτικών καλλιτεχνικών πρακτικών.

Τον Αύγουστο του 2024, η Περιφέρεια Κρήτης παρείχε οικονομική στήριξη στην ομάδα χορού Quo Vadis για την υλοποίηση του διακρατικού δημιουργικού εργαστηρίου στη Σητεία. Το εργαστήριο πραγματοποιήθηκε στο πλαίσιο του ευρωπαϊκού προγράμματος *Siniparksi – taking care of population through contemporary dance* και συγκέντρωσε τοπικούς και διεθνείς συμμετέχοντες σε μία διαδικασία συλλογικής καλλιτεχνικής έρευνας με επίκεντρο τη βιωσιμότητα του πολιτισμού.

## Ascen-Danse

### Fonds national d'aménagement et du territoire, Massif des Alpes

The National Fund for Regional Planning and Development (FNADT) – Alps Massif is a French public funding instrument to support balanced regional development. The fund supports projects that promote economic development, environmental protection, accessibility, and the sustainable management of natural resources in the Alpine region.

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Massif des Alpes

Le Fonds National d'Aménagement et de Développement du Territoire (FNADT) apporte le soutien de l'État, en investissement comme en fonctionnement, aux actions qui concourent à mettre en œuvre les choix stratégiques de la politique d'aménagement du territoire du Massif des Alpes.



## Caisse des dépôts et consignation

Caisse des dépôts et consignation

The Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations (CDC) is a French public financial institution serving the public interest. It operates under the supervision of the French Parliament and plays a key role in financing long-term investments in local and regional development, social housing, infrastructure, ecological transition, and digital transformation.



**Mécénat**

La Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations (CDC) est une institution financière publique française au service de l'intérêt général. Elle agit sous le contrôle du Parlement français et joue un rôle clé dans le financement d'investissements à long terme liés au développement local et régional, au logement social, aux infrastructures, à la transition écologique et à la transformation numérique.

## Free Dance

"The project Siniparksi is co-financed by the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia, the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, and the 'Kultura nova' Foundation." Through various forms of institutional and programme support, these bodies recognise and reinforce the role of dance as an important part of contemporary cultural production."

"Projekt Siniparksi sufinanciraju Ministarstvo kulture i medija RH, Ured za udruge Vlade Republike Hrvatske te Zaklada 'Kultura nova'." Kroz različite oblike institucionalne i programske podrške, ta tijela prepoznaju i osnažuju ulogu plesne umjetnosti kao važnog segmenta suvremene kulturne produkcije.

Disclaimer:

/EN/ "This publication was published with the financial support of the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia, the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, and the 'Kultura nova' Foundation."

The viewpoints expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official opinion of the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia, the Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs, or the 'Kultura nova' Foundation."

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Zaklada  
**Kultura nova**



Republika  
Hrvatska  
Ministarstvo  
kulture  
i medija  
Republic  
of Croatia  
Ministry  
of Culture  
and Media



**GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA**  
Office for Cooperation with NGOs

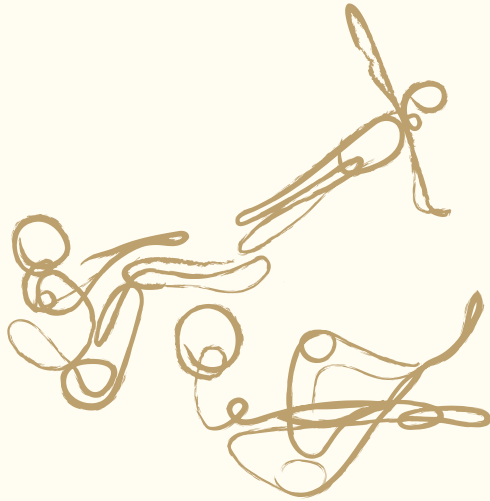
# TOOLS

This chapter aims at describing in detail the tools experienced and referenced to in the Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation part.

The following collection of co-creation tools is intended as a proposal to inspire and guide your practice. These exercises—ranging from warm-ups, self expression and composition techniques, to methods for fostering group cohesion, mood and creativity and introducing key principles of contemporary dance like interacting, touching and using the space—are designed with specific contexts in mind. However, we encourage readers to feel free to adapt or create their own tools based on personal preferences and needs. While these tools are suggested for particular scenarios, they are flexible and can be applied to a variety of situations as one sees fit. The aim is to empower each reader to explore, innovate, and shape their practice in a way that resonates best with them.

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## Awakening

### INSTRUCTION:

Exercise "Awakening" is a warm-up task exploring movement, balance, and space. This warm-up invites participants into a slow, mindful exploration of their physicality, with a focus on alignment, balance, and spatial awareness.

Beginning in a circle, participants move gradually and continuously, tuning into their weight, grounding, and internal sensations. The session flows through guided sequences—ranging from standing to floor work, solitary to partnered exploration—and concludes with expansive movement and quiet reflection.

- Space: Open area with space to form a circle and travel.
- Music: Gentle to rhythmic progression (live or recorded).
- Instructions: Keep minimal, clear, and responsive.
- Modelling: Use your voice and body to promote calm and slowness.
- Energy: Adapt tempo, spacing, or partner work to match group energy.
- Affirmations: *"There's no wrong way to explore"* / *"Let curiosity lead your movement"*

1. Circular and Slow Continuous Movement  
Cue: "Form a circle and begin moving slowly and continuously."  
Focus: Internal awareness, natural breath, soft gaze.  
Prompt: "Move as slowly as possible—what do you notice?"
2. Grounding and Stillness  
Cue: "Stand with your feet grounded, eyes closed if comfortable."  
Prompt: "Shift your weight gently side to side. Notice subtle shifts in balance."  
Add: "Feel the ground beneath you as you rise through the crown of your head."
3. Gentle Self-Massage and Release  
Cue: "Massage your neck, face, and ears."  
Prompt: "Release your arms and soften your shoulders. How is your energy shifting?"
4. Floor Connection & Cat Position Sequence  
Cue: "Bend your knees, feel the ground, and gently roll into a 'cat' position."  
Prompt: "Explore moving from standing to floor—can it feel like a wave?"
5. Traveling Through Space  
Cue: "Walk slowly and purposefully through space."  
Prompt: "Make eye contact, observe how others move. Let your arms and spine grow longer."  
Tempo shift: "Allow your upper body to lead. Explore range—big, small, curved, open."
6. Circle Hug Gesture + Gratitude Touch  
Cue: "Reform the circle. Open your arms wide—hug the space, then hug yourself."  
Prompt: "Touch your body with your palms. Offer gratitude as you brush or massage your limbs."
7. Expansive Movement and Extensions  
Cue: "Move outward into space, reaching in all directions."  
Prompt: "Let movement grow from your spine. Explore verticality, diagonals, spirals."
8. Balance Exploration  
Cue: "Shift your weight—sideways, forward, back. Try balancing on one leg."

Prompt: "How does instability feel like? What helps you regain control?"  
Encourage playfulness with falling, catching, holding.

#### 9. Partner and Group Work

Cue: "Split into two groups—Group 1 moves quickly while Group 2 holds balance poses."

Prompt: "Support each other physically or visually. How can you share space and weight?"

Emphasize transitions, the creative use of levels and limbs.

#### 10. Closing and Reflection

Cue: "Return to the musician (or central point) in your own time."

Prompt: "What do you notice in your body now? Where is your focus?"

Optional: Invitation to a verbal sharing or journaling.

### OBJECTIVE:

The goal of this task is to enhance body awareness through mindful movement, cultivate balance and spatial sensitivity, and support fluid transitions between levels and movement qualities. It also aims to build physical confidence, expand expressive potential, and promote collaborative engagement through partner and group interaction.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

Participants may find it challenging to slow down and remain present, particularly in contrast to the fast pace of daily life. Maintaining balance while exploring gravity, instability, and shifting levels can be both physically and mentally demanding. Some may feel hesitant or self-conscious during partner or group work, especially when it involves trust and physical support. Creating a safe, non-judgmental environment is essential to encourage risk-taking, confidence, and deeper embodied engagement.

### REFLECTION:

Encourage participants to reflect on how slowing down influenced their body awareness and movement quality. Invite them to notice shifts in balance, grounding, and spatial sensitivity, and to consider how these physical experiences affected their focus and emotional state. Prompt discussion or journaling around moments of connection—whether with themselves, space, or others—and how trust and presence evolved throughout the task. Reflection can also explore the value of risk-taking and how movement can foster both individual expression and collective empathy.

### TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

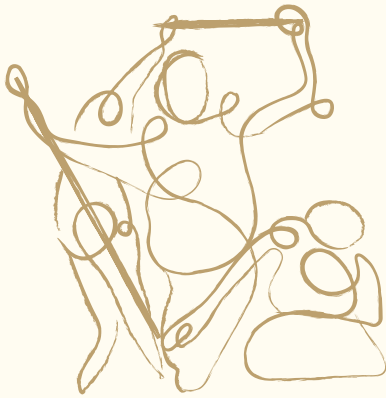
Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

- 1.2. Key elements of Contemporary dance
- 2.2. Well-being of the participants

Video Training Kit:

- A.1. In the Embrace of Gravity





## Bamboo sticks Connection

### INSTRUCTION:

In this task, dancers use bamboo sticks to explore connection, trust, breath, and movement. The bamboo serves as a shared point of contact, fostering balance and group awareness through physical interaction and mutual listening. This encourages improvisation and creative exploration of space.

#### *Exploration of Connection:*

Partner up and gently hold the bamboo stick between open palms, focusing on balance and avoiding gripping. Start with your eyes closed to tune into your partner's rhythms, weight, and energy. Move slowly together, gradually increasing speed and range as trust and coordination grow. Open your eyes as comfort builds, using the stick as an extension of your bodies to deepen the connection.

#### *Breath & Movement:*

Synchronize your breath with movement, experimenting with qualities like sharpness or smoothness while maintaining the connection. Explore leading and following or engage in equal partnership through shared initiations.

#### *Trust & Gaze:*

Introduce eye contact and focus on mutual gaze, shifting from the stick to each other's eyes. Experiment with different uses of the bamboo—lifting, balancing, or pushing—while maintaining a balanced energy exchange, where no dancer is passive.

### *Improvisation Practice:*

Allow free movement with the bamboo stick, focusing on deep listening and shared expression. Expand the group from pairs to trios, quartets, and eventually the whole group. Introduce shifts in dynamics—slowing down, speeding up, or freezing—to encourage responsiveness and non-verbal listening.

### *Choreographic Ideas:*

Incorporate group improvisation, using the bamboo as a bridge for interaction. Add live music or vocalizations for rhythm and presence and select memorable gestures to build into structured dance phrases.

### *Creative Exploration Prompts*

- Imagine the stick as a thread of energy—how do you keep it alive between you?
- Try keeping the stick light, floating between you. Notice your partner's response when one of you moves toward or away from the stick.

### *Movement Quality Prompts*

- Move as if you would be underwater, using the stick as a lifeline.
- Experiment with the stick as if it's heavy, then as if it's made of air. Explore how the movement changes with the stick held low or high.

### *Partner Interaction Prompts*

- Switch between leading and following without speaking.
- Feel how your breath influences the stick and notice your partner's response.
- Try maintaining connection without directly looking at the stick, using touch or peripheral gaze.

## OBJECTIVE:

This task aims to cultivate deep non-verbal communication and physical sensitivity through the shared use of bamboo sticks, encouraging dancers to explore connection, trust, and mutual awareness. By focusing on breath, energy, and movement quality, participants will strengthen their embodied connection within the group. The task enhances improvisational skills, deep listening—both physically and

emotionally—and responsiveness to each other's movements, while promoting collaboration and mutual trust without the need for verbal communication.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

Sensing the other through the bamboo stick requires deep listening and awareness, both of oneself and of the partner. This task encourages trust, connection, and responsiveness. Start with slow, deliberate movements to build comfort before progressing to more complex actions. As partners move at different tempos or directions, they must listen to each other's bodies, finding moments of stillness and tension. The bamboo stick becomes a tool for non-verbal communication, relying on movement and touch rather than words. Synchronizing breath with movement deepens the embodied connection.

### REFLECTION:

Aesthetically, the arrangement of the bamboo (lines) among the dancing bodies (spirals) creates a structural framework for composition within improvisation.

This task is an excellent way to foster trust, awareness, and creative expression in a duet setting, providing a dynamic space for deepening connection through movement and improvisation.

Reflect on how connecting through the bamboo stick felt. Consider moments of surprise or tension, how your partner's breath or movement influenced you, and how the bamboo affected your movement and trust. Think about whether eye contact deepened your connection, how the roles of leading and following shifted, and how improvisation helped you focus more on presence than on choreography.

### TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

3.5. Group cohesion

3.6.3. Physical contact

Video Training Kit:

A.2. Using indirect contact; Bamboo sticks connecting and taking care

A.2. Trust in Motion: Co-Creating Through Indirect Contact



## Bench

### INSTRUCTION:

Sitting on a bench side by side.

1. The leader teaches the participants a sequence designed to create unison and a common gesture involving touch.
2. The leader creates a phrase to be danced on the bench and asks the participants to repeat it three times (or more at first) while playing with it.
3. Then, participants improvise on the bench using top-down movements, always maintaining touch with the bench.
4. Afterward, they improvise on the bench without touching the ground.
5. Time for transmission (sharing and passing the movement).
6. Time for appropriation and interpretation (participants take ownership and make the movement their own).

### OBJECTIVE:

To explore how a restricted space, such as a bench, can transform into a dynamic choreographic object using everyday gestures. Participants will experiment with how their movement can evolve within the limitations of the space, incorporating both improvisation and structured sequences. The task encourages creativity in making the bench an integral part of the choreography, allowing it to become both a functional and expressive tool for movement exploration.

## CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

The challenge lies in navigating the physical limitations of the bench while exploring proximity between participants. The small, confined space requires dancers to creatively adapt their movements, using everyday gestures in ways that maintain fluidity and expression. Participants must balance the closeness of their bodies, allowing for connection and interaction without losing individual expression or control. The challenge is to discover how the bench can serve as both a functional and symbolic object, and how proximity can enhance or limit movement dynamics, fostering both collaboration and personal creativity within the space.

## REFLECTION:

This task reveals the creative potential that arises from working within a restricted space and exploring proximity. The bench, as both a functional and symbolic object, challenges participants to think outside of traditional movement patterns, pushing them to innovate and adapt their gestures. The close physical proximity encourages both individual expression and collaboration, offering a deeper connection between dancers as they navigate shared space. The challenge of using everyday gestures in this confined setting allows participants to see how limitations can fuel creativity and lead to unexpected, dynamic movement discoveries. Through this exercise, dancers learn to embrace restriction as a means of expanding their movement vocabulary and enhancing their ability to interact with others in meaningful ways.

## TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflection of Co-Creation:

5.1.4. Sources of inspiration and starting points

Video Training Kit:

B.3. Using everyday space; Bench as a mean for improvisation



## Coat

## INSTRUCTION:

### *Improvisation Tasks:*

1. Play with putting on and taking off a coat.
2. Move around while wearing a coat or cloak — where does that take you?
3. Explore: moving, staying in place, removing, and replacing the coat.
4. Leave the coat in one place, holding it while moving around.
5. Interact with the coat as if it were a real person.
6. In pairs: play with slipping into each other's sleeves, swapping coats, and putting them on and taking them off.
7. Group improvisation using all these elements.

### *Composition Phase:*

1. Ask the group to create a short scenario or scene with the coat as the central theme.
2. Propose a choreographic structure based on their improvisations.

### *Exploration Ideas:*

- Experiment with putting on and removing the coat while staying in one spot.
- Explore movement inspired by the sensation, weight, or constraint of wearing the coat.
- Play with keeping the coat stationary while you move around it.
- Treat the coat as a character to unlock narrative or theatrical possibilities.
- Use the coat to draw attention to specific parts of the body.
- Introduce interaction: start by exchanging coats in pairs, then expand to the whole group.

### **OBJECTIVE:**

The coat, as a symbol of protection, warmth, and outer appearance, serves as a powerful tool for exploring both personal and collective expression. Through this task, participants will use the coat to deepen their individual movement exploration while also fostering connection with others. The coat becomes a vehicle for both solo and group dance, encouraging participants to explore themes of covering, revealing, and transformation. This task invites the sharing of movement across generations, bridging gaps through physical interaction and collaboration, ultimately creating a space where personal and communal identities can be expressed and celebrated.

### **CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:**

The coat stimulates individual imagination and creativity, and the challenge lies in fostering a collaborative environment where the group collectively drives the creative process. Participants must take ownership of the tool (the coat) and contribute to the development of ideas, while the choreographer's role is to guide, structure, and organize these contributions into a cohesive dance. Balancing individual expression with group collaboration, and managing diverse proposals, requires sensitivity and coordination to ensure the co-creation process flows smoothly.

### **REFLECTION:**

This task highlights the power of a simple object—the coat—to spark individual creativity and foster group collaboration. Participants explore personal movement while connecting with others, using the coat as both a tool and a symbol. The process of co-creation encourages a shared responsibility for shaping the dance, allowing diverse ideas to merge and evolve. Through this, participants experience how collective input can lead to innovative and cohesive choreography, while the choreographer's role in organizing and guiding these ideas is crucial in bringing the group's vision to life.

### **TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):**

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

2.3. Collective imagination

5.1.4 Sources of inspiration and starting points

Video Training Kit:

B.1. Using daily gestures ; Daily Gesture choreography

C.2. Collective memory references ;

The Discotheque : common understanding

C.3. Common cultural objects; Dancing with coats



## Colour Game

### INSTRUCTION:

The teacher leads the session by giving instructions and clarifying which actions, poses, or physical states correspond to each colour, beginning with demonstration, explanation, and active participation in the game alongside the participants. This guided approach gradually transitions into playful improvisation.

Participants respond to specific colours, each representing a distinct movement quality. The colour-to-movement associations are as follows:

- Green: Slow stretches on the floor – (Mood/quality: Grounded, relaxed).
- Red: Hold a balance, often on the floor – (Mood/quality: Focused, aligned).
- Grey: Squeeze or compress the body – (Mood/quality: Tense, strong).
- Black: Stand still or gently turn – (Mood/quality: Stillness, minimal movement).
- Blue: Run freely through space – (Mood/quality: Energetic, exploratory).
- Pink: Burst into fast, fluid dance – (Mood/quality: Joyful, expressive).

The musician adapts tempo and energy to reflect each colour's mood. Movement sequences flow organically, often combining colour stimuli (e.g., Red + Blue), with verbal and instinctive cues from the facilitator.

### Flow & Combination Suggestions:

- Start with Green (floor work) → Red (balance)
- Add Blue (run) → Black (still)
- Mix Red + Blue to include partner contact & clapping
- Introduce Bear Walk: slow on all fours → speed up
- Revisit Grey + Black for grounded tension
- Eyes closed stretch → floating motion (Red + Grey)
- Add Catwalk → speed up into Blue, slow down to Black
- Slow walk (hands up) → find partner, give/receive weight
- Return to Pink → joyful expression
- Close with backward walk → faster pace → gather all together (group weight-sharing)

### OBJECTIVE:

To guide participants through diverse movement states—grounded, dynamic, balanced, and expressive—encouraging creativity, connection, and body awareness in a group setting.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

This task challenges participants to respond creatively to colour-based stimuli that represent different movement qualities. As they interpret these abstract cues, they must remain aware of the group dynamic, ensuring both safety and connection. A key teaching focus is guiding participants to manage smooth transitions between contrasting energies—such as stillness and explosive movement—while encouraging creative partner work through safe weight-sharing. Participants are supported in shifting fluidly between energy levels and exploring connection through touch, balance, and shared movement. The exercise strengthens non-verbal communication, responsiveness, and the ability to balance personal exploration with group cohesion. Emphasis is placed on inclusion, attentive listening, and individual interpretation, allowing each participant to contribute meaningfully at their own pace and ability level.



## REFLECTION:

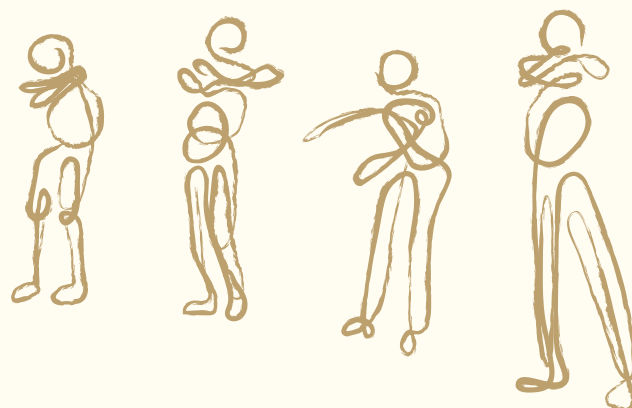
This task aims to foster playful, intuitive exploration of movement, enhancing body awareness, group connection, and collaborative responsiveness.

The colour-coded system allows participants to explore a wide range of movement dynamics in an accessible and engaging way. The flow of the exercise encourages trust, cooperation, and attentiveness within the group. It deepens body awareness while fostering a sense of community, making the warm-up both effective and enjoyable.

Participants are invited to reflect on which movements feel most intuitive or challenging, how working with a partner influences their experience, how their body awareness evolves throughout the activity, and whether the task strengthens their connection to the group.

## TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:  
1.2. Key elements of Contemporary dance



## Embodied Narratives

### INSTRUCTION:

Embodied Narratives is a movement-based task that invites participants to interpret songs or poems as lived experiences, transforming spoken or sung text into expressive physical storytelling. This practice deepens emotional resonance and fosters inclusive, non-verbal communication through the body.

As a storytelling exercise, Embodied Narratives challenges participants to explore multiple ways of reading text—poetically, rhythmically, emotionally—and to translate these interpretations into movement. By doing so, it enables individuals to express emotion, culture, and connection beyond words, making it a powerful and inclusive form of creative communication.

This task invites participants to explore the expressive potential of text within a movement-based co-creation workshop. It challenges dancers to convey narrative, emotion, and meaning purely through body movement, deepening both their physical and emotional range. This tool is especially effective for practicing improvisation that balances text, movement, and personal expression, encouraging embodied responses to poetry, speech, and emotional content.

Participants will engage in movement improvisation rooted in storytelling. Using a chosen song (without lyrics), they will:

1. Read the lyrics aloud as a neutral statement.
2. Reinterpret the lyrics as if delivering a political speech.
3. Perform the lyrics with emotional intensity, as if expressing personal truth.

After each phase, dancers will translate the emotional or rhetorical tone into improvised movement, allowing voice and body to work together to convey meaning.

The second phase of the task explores body posture during text delivery, followed by movement improvisation using spoken word. Participants are encouraged to experiment with how their movements complement, contrast, or disrupt the text—finding balance, counterpoints, and personal expression in the relationship between words and movement.

### **OBJECTIVE:**

To explore the relationship between text and movement, encouraging participants to express narrative and emotion through the body. This task aims to develop skills in physical storytelling, enhance emotional presence, and deepen creative interpretation by translating spoken word into movement, exploring how posture, tone, and physicality shape meaning.

### **CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:**

Participants may initially default to literal gestures when interpreting lyrics, especially when dealing with political or vulnerable themes. Expressing deeper emotions through movement can feel unfamiliar or uncomfortable. Hesitation or self-consciousness may arise, making it harder to explore abstract or symbolic expression. Facilitators should encourage creative risk-taking, model diverse responses, and foster a supportive environment where all interpretations are valued—helping participants move beyond surface storytelling into deeper emotional and metaphorical exploration.

### **REFLECTION:**

This task invites participants to deepen their connection to movement by embodying the emotional tone and intention of song lyrics. Shifting between interpretations—political, emotional, or personal—unlocks a range of movement qualities and fosters expressive diversity. While some may begin with literal gestures or feel hesitant with vulnerable themes, a supportive environment and gentle guidance help them move beyond surface expression. Exploring lyrics like *Can't Buy Me Love* – The Beatles encourages meaningful conversations about societal values and personal emotions, illustrating how a single text can inspire varied and layered storytelling through movement.

### **TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):**

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

5.1.4. Sources of inspiration and starting points

Video Training Kit:

B.2. Text in Motion: Generating Dance from Emotion and Meaning



## Emoji

### INSTRUCTION:

Instructions are given using small cards or emojis, each representing different emotional characteristics.

1. To the group: The leader shows the cards, and everyone uses the emoji to develop a quality of movement inspired by the emotion it represents.
2. Individually: While improvising, each dancer looks at the emoji and modifies their dance by integrating the emotion proposed.
3. Create a common chain: Arrange the group in a line with one person at the front, who demonstrates a movement related to the emotion. The group learns this movement. Then, takes it in turns to do the same thing in front of the group, with everyone gradually learning all the movements. The group accumulates these movements to create a long chain.
4. Play in different spaces: The group takes the sequence into different areas and explores variations. Participants are encouraged to play with others and explore the chain together.

### OBJECTIVE:

To explore how emotional qualities, represented through emojis, can influence and transform the quality and intention of movement during improvisation. This task encourages participants to experiment with how different emotions affect their physical expression,

allowing them to modify the quality of their dance and the intention behind each gesture. Through this exploration, dancers deepen their understanding of emotional expression and enhance their improvisational skills.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

The challenge lies in encouraging dancers to adapt and transform their movement in response to different emotional qualities. Participants must shift from their habitual dance patterns and explore new ways of expressing emotion through movement. This requires a high level of flexibility, both mentally and physically, as they must continuously evolve their dance to integrate each new emotional intention. The task also involves maintaining creativity and spontaneity while ensuring that the emotional change is authentically expressed in the movement, allowing the dance to evolve organically over time.

### REFLECTION:

This task highlights the powerful connection between emotion and movement, showing how different emotional states can dramatically alter the quality and intention of dance. By using emojis to guide improvisation, participants learned to tap into a range of emotions, pushing them to evolve and modify their dance continuously. The challenge of adapting to new emotional cues fostered creative flexibility, allowing dancers to explore diverse expressions and develop a deeper understanding of how intention shapes movement. The process also encouraged collaboration, as the group accumulated and shared movements, enhancing their ability to connect emotionally through dance.

### TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

5.1.4. Sources of inspiration and starting points

Video Training Kit:

B.2. Using emotions; Imagine watching a show

B.2. Using emotions; Emoji cards: adding expressive layer



## Emojournal

### INSTRUCTION:

"Emojournal" is an exercise encouraging self-expression through emotional journaling. As a tool, it functions as an emotion journal with guided actions to feel, draw, and move.

This activity invites participants to perceive movement as a personal language—a form of self-expression rooted in emotional truth. It fosters openness, honesty, and a non-judgmental mindset.

This emotion journal is not about doing it 'right'—it's about creating space to express how dancers feel. It's a tool to explore emotions, awaken the inner artist, and understand how feelings live in our bodies and our dance.

Use the "Emojournal" at key moments during the session (e.g., after improvisation or co-creation). Provide participants with paper or a worksheet that includes space for the following:

**FEEL** – Name the emotion and locate it in the body.

**DRAW** – Express the emotion visually through shapes, colours, or images.

**MOVE** – Reflect on how the emotion influenced your dance (qualities, impulses, or changes).

(Optional) – Share reflections in pairs or as a group.

Instructions for Use:

### FEEL

"What are you feeling right now?"

- Write or choose an emotion (e.g., excited, tense, joyful, happy, sad, curious, frustrated, energized, scared, peaceful).
- Where do you feel it in your body? (e.g., chest, hands, legs).

### DRAW

"How can you express this feeling visually?"

- Draw what the emotion looks like to you—abstract, symbolic, or realistic.
- Use colours, lines, shapes, or images to express intensity or sensation.  
Prompt: "If your emotion had a shape or colour, what would it be?"

### MOVE

"Express it through dance"

- Reflect on how the emotion influenced your movement (e.g., slow, sharp, flowing).
- How did this feeling shape your dance today?

Optional Writing Prompts:

- "My body moved like..."
- "This feeling made me want to..."
- "My dance felt..." (e.g., flowing, sharp, heavy, chaotic)
- "This emotion made me want to..." (stretch, curl, jump, pause, etc.)
- Encourage participants to perceive movement as a personal language—a form of self-expression.

Optional Sharing:

Invite sharing in pairs or as a group—always voluntary.

Journaling Moments (Before / During / After Tasks):

Use the "Emojournal" during significant transitions, such as:

- After improvisation or expressive movement.
- After co-creation exercises or performance.

- Before final reflection or the closing circle.

Additionally, you can incorporate journaling before and after dance performances. Ask participants to draw how they feel before dancing, and then again after performing. This offers a visual record of how emotions shift through movement.

## **OBJECTIVE:**

This tool is an excellent way to help participants explore and express their emotions through movement, drawing, and writing, while fostering self-awareness and artistic voice. It encourages dancers to reflect on how physical activity can shift emotional states and express these changes visually. This task supports emotional awareness, artistic identity, and creative autonomy in a non-judgmental space. Teachers are encouraged to frame journaling as personal expression, validate all emotions, and create a focused, supportive environment for exploration.

## **CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:**

Participants in a co-creation workshop may feel self-conscious or uncertain about expressing deep emotions through drawing or movement, particularly if they are not used to open forms of expression. Time constraints can also limit the depth of emotional exploration, making it difficult to fully reflect within the session. Additionally, emotional intensity during journaling and movement may trigger personal responses, requiring teachers to offer emotional support or space when needed. For participants, challenges can include uncertainty about how to express emotions, fear of vulnerability, difficulty connecting internal feelings to movement, and hesitation to draw or write due to a lack of confidence. Overthinking or fear of "getting it wrong" can also create barriers. For teachers, challenges include creating a safe and emotionally supportive space, encouraging participation without pressuring individuals to share, managing emotional responses with care, and supporting dancers through their emotional exploration while respecting their privacy.

## **REFLECTION:**

The "Emojournal" is a valuable tool for exploring emotions, enhancing creativity, and building emotional awareness. It helps dancers connect mind, body, and spirit through drawing, writing, and movement, fostering emotional intelligence, personal growth, and artistic expression.

Its three-part structure encourages emotional awareness, creative expression, and embodied reflection, allowing participants to process and express emotions holistically. The journal helps dancers understand their feelings, express complex emotions, and communicate internal states through movement. It also promotes personal insight by connecting emotions to movement, drawing, and writing, facilitating emotional release and clarity. When shared in a group, it fosters empathy and mutual support, highlighting the universality of emotions. Facilitators should reflect on whether dancers found meaningful ways to express emotions, felt empowered to share their artistic voice, and how journaling influenced their engagement with movement and co-creation.

## **TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):**

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

2.4. Self-expression

5.1.4. Sources of inspiration and starting points

.





## Gaze

### INSTRUCTION:

This exercise helps develop awareness of how to approach another, how to dance together in proximity, how to create space between each other, and how to play with distance — both separation and closeness. It reveals how an invisible connection through the gaze can inspire the dance, sometimes interrupting movement and leading to the discovery of new pathways.

1. Take possession of the space by moving into areas where no one else is. As you move, make sure to pass between two people (through the middle) or between someone and a wall.
2. The group moves around the space while looking at each other. When two people meet eyes, they smile and stop, taking a moment to truly look at one another. This helps everyone to become aware of and connect with all members of the group.
3. In pairs, ask participants to connect through eye contact and never look away from each other. They will play with distance by getting closer and moving further apart:
  - First, person A stays in place while person B moves.
  - Then, they switch roles: A moves and B remains still.
  - Finally, both partners move.
  - Afterward, invite them to repeat the exercise while moving along diagonal trajectories and to explore this interaction in the centre of the space.

Choreographic Development:

The duets start moving one after another, allowing each dancer time to observe the others' improvisations. Each dancer moves for-

ward along the diagonal, performs a duet at the centre, then turns and rejoins the group.

The group intercepts this return: one person places both hands on the back of the returning dancer, accompanying them as they move backward. Then, they face each other, connecting with hands.

### OBJECTIVE:

To explore and develop partner connection, spatial awareness, and movement dynamics through observation, improvisation, and physical interaction. Establishing a connection through the eyes is the first step to get in contact contact, fostering trust and presence between partners. This task encourages dancers to engage with timing, counterbalance, and mutual support while transitioning between individual and group roles, deepening their sensitivity for others in the shared space.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

Encouraging participants to quickly establish a genuine connection and build a non-verbal relationship through eye contact and physical interaction—without relying on spoken communication. This requires increased sensitivity, trust, and presence, especially for those who may be less comfortable with proximity or prolonged eye contact.

### REFLECTION:

This task reveals how eye contact and physical presence can foster deep, non-verbal connections between dancers. It highlights the power of subtle cues—like gaze, timing, and touch—in creating trust and shared movement. Participants often become more aware of their own body language and the dynamics of initiating and responding, leading to more intuitive and expressive interactions.

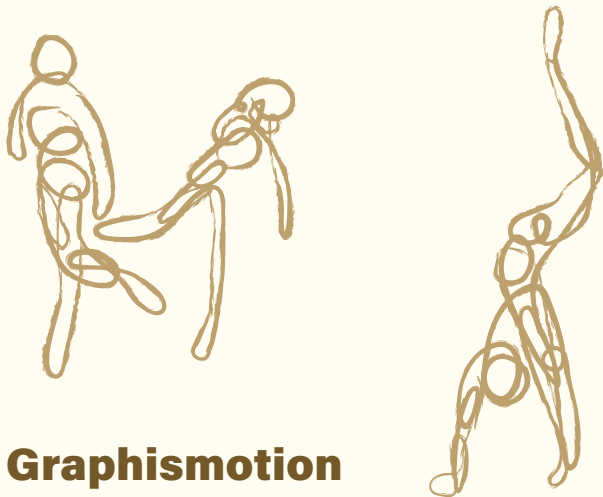
### TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

- 1.2. Key elements of Contemporary dance
- 2.2. Well-being of the participants
- 3.6.2. Non-Verbal communication

Video Training Kit:

A.2. Using indirect contact; Gaze tool: interacting by looking



## Graphismotion

### INSTRUCTION:

"Graphismotion", a multidisciplinary art tool, helps to explore the relationship between gesture and line through dance and drawing.

In a co-creation dance workshop, integrating drawing into the process of expressing and documenting emotions can be a powerful way to deepen the connection between body movement and emotional expression. Below are some ideas for activities that combine dance and drawing.

#### *Interpretive Movement Drawing*

This activity combines music, movement, and visual art to help participants express emotions in layered ways.

- Play a piece of music or sound and ask participants to move in ways that reflect the mood or story of the music.
- Afterwards, invite them to draw the shapes, lines, and patterns that emerged during their dance.

This helps participants translate abstract emotions and feelings first into physical movement, and then into visual symbols.

#### *Drawing Before and After Dance*

- Before dancing, ask participants to draw how they feel in that moment.
- Throughout the workshop, encourage them to revisit their drawings and document their evolving emotions, thoughts, and sensations using lines, shapes, words, or symbols.

- After performing a final dance, participants should draw how they feel post-dance.

This task visually captures the emotional transformation that occurs through movement, offering a personal record of the workshop experience.

### OBJECTIVE:

To explore and express emotions through the integration of dance and drawing, allowing participants to reflect on their emotional states, strengthen the connection between movement and feeling, and document their emotional journey in a creative, visual form.

The tasks aim to deepen emotional awareness and expressive capabilities through guided movement and reflective drawing. The process encourages creative interpretation, emotional reflection, and the development of a personal visual narrative.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

Participants will be challenged to translate internal emotional experiences into both physical movement and visual expression. This involves developing emotional awareness, experimenting with nonverbal communication through dance, and expressing abstract feelings through drawing—often pushing beyond familiar comfort zones of expression.

### REFLECTION:

Participants are encouraged to reflect on how their emotions shift throughout the dance and drawing process. By comparing their pre- and post-dance drawings, they can gain insight into the impact of movement on emotional states. This reflection promotes self-awareness, emotional literacy, and a deeper understanding of the expressive potential of the body and visual art.

### TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

2.4. Self-expression

Video Training Kit:

B.2. Emotions in Motion: Reflecting on Dance Together



## Hello and Goodbye

### INSTRUCTION:

1. Participants walk around the space in random pathways, allowing their movement to flow naturally.
2. Each time their eyes meet or their paths cross, they acknowledge one another with a greeting. This can be a simple gesture, such as a nod or a wave, or a warm smile.
3. As they continue, they extend a hand as if embracing the other person's shoulder, walking together for a moment before deciding to part ways and continue on their own path.
4. If they feel comfortable, they may choose to share a full embrace, as if saying, "It's good to see you." They can remain in this hug for a moment before gently separating, as if saying, "Goodbye."
5. The process repeats, allowing each encounter to unfold naturally, exploring the fluidity of connection and separation.

The embrace can evolve in different ways:

- One person begins to *melt downward*, attempting to escape the hug by releasing their weight, while the other tries to maintain the shape of the embrace.
- One person tries to *pull away*, but the other resists, not letting them go.

This interaction can happen with alternating roles, where one person leaves and the other decides whether to release them or hold on, or with fixed roles, where each maintains their chosen intention.

Each variation reveals shifts in movement intention, creating clear dynamics and relationships that unfold naturally for both the participants and any observers.

### OBJECTIVE:

Introduction of touch, instant composition, storytelling, working with dynamics.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

If participants do not know each other well, the hug can be replaced with a simple handshake. In cases of significant cultural differences, the process can focus just on movement through space and distant reactions. Alternatively, participants may use spoken words, saying "Hello" and "Goodbye" aloud to acknowledge each encounter and separation.

### REFLECTION:

This process is particularly useful in scene creation for a potential performance, as it naturally builds a story and relationships between participants. Additionally, due to the interpersonal nature of the gestures and interactions, it helps participants remember the sequence more easily. This makes it especially effective in short-term creative workshops, such as a three-day intensive, where there is limited time to develop material but a need for strong, memorable connections on stage.

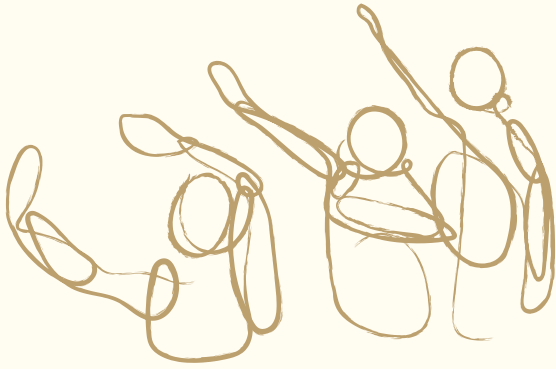
### TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

- 1.3. Significance of daily gestures
- 3.5. group cohesion

Video Training Kit:

- A.1. The Space Between Us: From Hug to Dance
- B.1. From Daily Gestures to Dance – Exploring the Hug



## Imagine watching a show

### INSTRUCTION:

1. While sitting in the auditorium, each participant imagines they are watching a show and finds a gesture that relates to the emotion that arises.
2. On stage, the participants form a line. One person stands in front and proposes a movement to the group related to the emotion. The group learns the movement. Each participant then takes turns walking in front of the group, gradually learning all the movements and accumulating them to create a long chain.
3. Repeat the sequence in different spaces and explore variations.

### OBJECTIVE:

To engage participants' imagination, feelings, and emotions in the creation of movement. This task encourages dancers to draw on their personal emotional responses to the idea of watching a show, using these feelings to inspire individual gestures. The goal is to explore how emotions can shape and influence movement, creating a collective choreography that evolves through shared experiences and accumulated gestures.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

The challenge lies in authentically expressing and sharing personal emotions through movement while remaining open to the group's collective experience. Participants must tap into their own emotional states and find ways to translate these feelings into physical gestures that resonate with others. The difficulty is in ensuring that each dancer's personal emotion contributes to a shared vocabulary of movement, allowing the group to build a cohesive and emotionally connected performance. Balancing individual expression with group integration requires vulnerability, trust, and a sensitivity to the emotions of others, creating a dynamic interaction between personal and collective experience.

### TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

1.3. Significance of daily gestures

Video Training Kit:

B.2. Watching a show: spectators emotions as a catalyst



## Living Painting

### INSTRUCTION:

#### Source of Inspiration

Begin by selecting one or more images such as paintings, drawings, or other types of visual artwork. These images will serve as the basis for the physical and imaginative exploration that follows.

#### Embodied Representation

Participants are invited to embody the chosen image(s) collectively, forming a living composition — like a physical puzzle made up of individual bodies. Each person contributes a part of the whole, using posture, gesture, and spatial relation to represent elements from the image.

#### Movement Exploration

Once the initial shape is formed, the group explores how this living painting can:

- Move through space (e.g. slowly shifting direction, changing levels, expanding or contracting),
- Transform into other shapes or images (through gradual or sudden changes),
- Highlight a specific element drawn from the artwork, such as:
  - A visual motif or structure (lines, colors, or composition),
  - An emotional tone (tension, serenity, chaos, etc.),
  - Narrative or characters (if the image suggests a scene or story).

#### Transitions and Transformation

Consider:

- How does the group transition from a neutral, resting state into the initial composition?
- What triggers the transformation of the shape?
- What happens after the representation dissolves? Does the group return to stillness, disperse, or evolve into a new image?

### Creative Focus

Encourage participants to reflect on their role within the group image and the overall dynamic. Emphasize collaboration, sensitivity to others' movements, and openness to emerging interpretations.

### OBJECTIVE:

Group cohesion, explore the feeling of group creation of shape in space, performative mindset, focus on the shape of their bodies and how their decisions influence the space and the overall image of the group, collective imagination.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

If the group is familiar with the exercise, they may experiment with speed, coordination, and even the initiative to change the direction of movement.

If there is a lack of touching, the group can form a firm shape without touching each other and even with further distances, and then continue to find a way to move through space by shapeshifting. Different kinds of paintings can be used as a reference, and even the transformation / transition can happen from "painting to painting" ensuring space and consent between participants.

### REFLECTION:

Representation of Motion in Still Art: With this tool, we replicate the sensation of movement captured in a work of art, while it is a static object. In other words, when we look at a photograph or painting that depicts a moment of action, our minds imagine that scene in motion, even though a photograph is a freeze-frame in time. This tool also enhances collective imagination by encouraging participants to take time to observe the chosen image, share thoughts and interpretations, and collectively decide on the action to be embodied. Through this process, they co-create a shared visual and physical narrative, responding to each other's movements and choices in real time. The exercise strengthens the group's ability to imagine together, transforming still imagery into a dynamic, living experience.

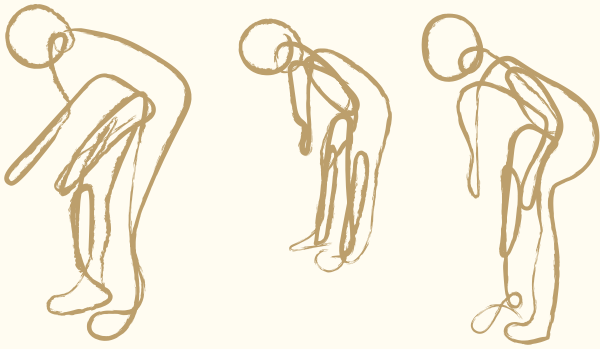
### TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

2.3. Collective imagination

5.1.4. Sources of inspiration and starting points





## Maestro Technique

### INSTRUCTION:

The "Maestro Technique" is a group improvisation exercise in which one dancer leads while the others follow, respond to, or reinterpret their movements non-verbally. Leadership shifts naturally within the group, allowing for fluid transitions and shared ownership. This method fosters group cohesion, supports creative decision-making, and invites dancers to explore the dynamic balance between leading and following.

Incorporating storytelling, participants are encouraged not only to mirror movement but to embody narrative intention—letting gestures, rhythm, and spatial choices suggest characters, emotions, or evolving scenes. As the lead shifts, so does the direction of the group's shared story, transforming improvisation into a co-created, physical narrative.

#### 1. *Introduce the Game*

Explain that one dancer becomes the "Maestro" (leader), guiding the group with their movements. Others follow, respond, or reinterpret what they see.

Emphasize:

- The leader can move freely in space, using body, levels, rhythm, and qualities.
- The group's task is to stay connected to the leader while allowing movement to evoke a shared story or mood.

#### 2. *Set Clear Group Agreements*

- Move silently—all communication is non-verbal.
- Listen with your eyes, body, and spatial awareness.
- Respect personal space and group energy.
- Be open to surprise, shifts, and changes in leadership.

#### 3. *Rotate Leadership*

Let multiple participants try being the Maestro in short rounds (1–2 minutes each). Encourage variety in pace, style, and spatial use. Optionally, the leader can "pass" the role non-verbally to another dancer.

#### 4. *Variations (Optional)*

- Introduce live music or a soundscape to influence rhythm and emotional tone.
- Allow multiple leaders or duos to co-lead.
- Give thematic prompts (e.g., "lead with joy," "move like water," "tell a secret," or "travel through time").

### OBJECTIVE:

The "Maestro Technique" aims to develop leadership, group awareness, and non-verbal communication through improvisation. By layering in storytelling intention, the task deepens emotional expression and enhances the creative power of collective movement, inviting dancers to become co-authors of a shared, evolving story.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

The "Maestro Technique" challenges participants to embrace vulnerability both in leadership and followership. Stepping into the spotlight can feel exposing, while following requires letting go of control and staying open to non-verbal cues. Navigating group dynamics, spatial awareness, and improvisation demands deep trust and presence. Facilitators must create a psychologically safe environment, balance group dynamics, and ensure that all participants feel seen and heard, while respecting individual boundaries.

## REFLECTION:

After the activity, participants reflect on their experiences of leading and following—exploring feelings of empowerment, discomfort, flow, or resistance. They consider how group energy shifted with each leader and what they learned about trust, authority, and creative collaboration. Reflection can take the form of journaling, drawing, movement, or brief sharing, guided by prompts such as, “What did I learn about myself as a mover and a leader today?”

## TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:  
5.1.4. Sources of inspiration and starting points



## Mingling

### INSTRUCTION:

“Mingling” is an exercise that invites participants to explore the movements of greetings and cultural gestures from around the world. This task not only expands movement vocabulary but also fosters empathy, inclusion, and cross-cultural understanding—making it especially valuable for collective dance creation. Mingling can evolve into a short choreographic piece that retains its focus on cultural expression while developing into a dynamic, structured composition.

### 1. Context & Warm-Up

Begin with a brief discussion on cultural greeting gestures (e.g., bow, handshake, wave, namaste, hongi).

Emphasize greetings as meaningful social and cultural rituals.

Invite participants to walk freely through the space, greeting others using gestures from their own backgrounds or researched cultures.

### 2. Exploration & Selection

Repeat the greeting walk several times to explore variety.

Encourage participants to observe gesture qualities—such as energy, rhythm, and emotional tone.

Each dancer selects 1–2 gestures that resonate with them and develops these into short movement phrases.

### 3. Duets & Encounters

In pairs, dancers exchange and combine their selected gestures to create greeting duets.

Explore mirroring, tempo shifts, and variations in rhythm, level, or direction.

Allow greetings to evolve into more fluid partner movement and transitions.

*Choreographic Note: Encourage ripple effects, canons, or shifting group formations across the space.*

### 4. Group Composition & Imagination

Use the gestures as a springboard for collective creation.

Invite participants to explore how greetings might appear across cultures, through time, or in imagined futures.

Facilitate group improvisation that weaves individual phrases into a shared choreography—guided by connection, creativity, and cultural respect.

### 5. Collective Phrase

As a group, select 4–6 key greeting gestures.

Craft a set sequence, first performed in unison, then varied through canon, echo, or contrasting group formations.

Experiment with dynamics—tempo, direction, and spatial levels—to enrich the composition.

Choreographic Note: This process invites participants to imagine how greetings might look across time, cultures, or distances.

What does it mean to greet someone across a great divide? Without words? In joy? In sorrow? Structure encounters so they ripple across the stage using tools such as canons, staggered timing, or cluster formations.

Through this exploration, Mingling becomes more than a physical task—it evolves into a co-created ritual of welcome, empathy, and belonging. The outcome may take the form of a short dance piece or a performative structure that honours cultural gestures while transforming them into something new—shaped by the group's shared creativity and mutual respect.

Consider using ambient or world music and soft lighting to support an atmosphere of reflection and connection.

## OBJECTIVE:

The objective is to explore and celebrate cultural diversity through greeting gestures, using them as choreographic material for collective dance creation. The task aims to enhance awareness of how movement communicates intention, respect, and connection, while promoting inclusivity, empathy, and collaboration in artistic processes.

## CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

The challenge of practice involves ensuring cultural gestures are explored with respect and understanding, avoiding imitation or stereotypes, and encouraging curiosity and care. Participants must adapt culturally specific gestures into meaningful movement phrases while maintaining their essence and finding fluid transitions between diverse gestures. Additionally, there is an emphasis on promoting sincerity and presence in each greeting, avoiding mechanical repetition, and staying connected to the intention behind each gesture.

The challenge of choreography lies in

seamlessly integrating diverse cultural gestures into a cohesive, fluid movement sequence while respecting their original meaning and maintaining emotional sincerity.

## REFLECTION:

This task encourages reflection on cultural diversity, exploring how greeting gestures vary across communities and transform into expressive movement. It also prompts insight into group collaboration and personal connection to one's own and others' cultural practices.

## TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

1.3. Significance of daily gestures

2.3. Collective imagination

Video Training Kit:

C.2. Greetings in Motion:

A Co-Creation Dance Tool

C.2. Cultural references that Connect



## Namemotion

### INSTRUCTION:

"NameMotion" is a dance icebreaker exercise that invites participants to explore personal identity and group connection by expressing their names through gesture and movement. This simple yet creative task encourages participants to introduce themselves by transforming their names into gestures or short movement phrases.

Ideal for opening a workshop, rehearsal process, or community dance session, it fosters connection, playfulness, and confidence – setting a tone of openness and creativity.

#### 1. Warm-Up & Context:

Gather participants in a circle or a scattered formation. Briefly introduce the idea of using movement as a form of communication.

Invite each person to consider how their name feels in their body.

#### 2. Creating the Gesture:

Ask participants to create 1–3 movement gestures that express their name. These can reflect:

- The rhythm or syllables of their name.
- The shape or energy their name suggests.
- A gesture representing their personality or cultural identity.

Encourage creativity—gestures can be literal or abstract, fluid, sharp, soft, large, or small.

#### 3. Sharing in a Circle:

Everyone stands in a circle. In the first round, one person walks to the middle, says their name, then returns to their place. The rest of the group walks towards the centre, repeats the name, and walks back. Continue this pattern until all participants have gone.

- In the next round, each participant steps into the centre (or stays in place), says their name aloud, and performs their gesture. The group repeats the name and gesture in unison. Continue until everyone has shared.

#### 4. Variation (Optional):

- In a second round, each participant pairs their name with a unique movement. They walk to the centre, say their name, and perform their movement, which the whole group then copies as precisely as possible.

- Eventually, names are dropped, and only the movements remain, forming a sequence the group connects to individual identities.

- If someone struggles to create a movement, they can try a pose or a fleeting motion – like a gesture of "I don't know" or "being blank".

- After all participants have shared, try a "name chain" by remembering and repeating each person's name and gesture in sequence.

#### 5. Composition and Choreographic ideas:

Participants can expand on the name gestures by transforming them into a group choreography that blends personal expression with collective movement. Starting in small groups, they can explore each other's gestures through layering, mirroring, or sequencing. As a full group, they develop the material into patterns such as canon, call-and-response, or unison, incorporating spatial shifts and traveling. This process turns individual introductions into a shared composition that celebrates identity and connection.

## OBJECTIVE:

To create a safe and playful space where participants can get to know one another, build confidence and presence through voice and movement, explore the connection between identity and self-expression, and strengthen group cohesion and memory through shared participation.

This exercise helps to break the ice and create a relaxed, playful atmosphere. As everyone must do this including the choreographer it creates a sense of connection and group energy.

This exercise shows that making mistakes or having "dancers-block" is fine. In the long run, it will help participants feel comfortable generating movement on their own. Also, it immediately creates movement material that might be used later in the workshop.

## CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

The main challenges of this task include helping participants overcome shyness and supporting memory in recalling names and gestures. Additionally, it involves encouraging genuine self-expression without self-consciousness and guiding them in creatively translating their names into movement.

Other challenges include spontaneously coming up with a movement, remembering and executing others' movements, letting go of self-judgment, embracing creativity and mistakes, and staying engaged and present within the group dynamic.

## REFLECTION:

This exercise is a fun icebreaker that helps participants feel comfortable creating movements. It also introduces them to one another and to the choreographer. This is a great way to see how comfortable participants are with movement creation.

By creating movements on the spot – and, in this exercise, letting the first idea be the best idea – participants learn that there are no mistakes, only new movement possibilities. This encourages them to teach and learn from each other, placing them in a creator role right away. These movements can be used in various ways throughout the workshop, and the exercise can even be repeated on a second day to explore how movement ideas evolve.

This reflection invites participants to consider how it felt to express their name through movement, what they learned about others by observing gestures, how different movement qualities emerged, whether movement supported memory, and how gestures might reflect personal or cultural identity.

## TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

- 1.3. Significance of daily gestures
- 2.4. Self-expression
- 3.2. Getting to know the group as choreographer

Video Training Kit:

- B.1. Why use daily gestures – Storytelling.





## Playing with sounds of voice

### INSTRUCTION:

1. The choreographer produces a variety of vocal sounds, and the dancers respond simultaneously with corresponding movements.
2. In a circle, participants explore a wide range of sounds made with the mouth and voice.
3. The choreographer dances, and the group searches for sounds that correspond to the proposed movements.
4. In pairs: Person A dances while Person B creates corresponding sounds. Then switch roles.
5. Individually, dance and simultaneously improvise the corresponding sounds.
6. In pairs: engage in a dialogue by dancing with your own sounds, one after the other, to create a "conversation." Observe each duet.

### OBJECTIVE:

To explore how vocal sounds can generate and influence movement by offering texture, rhythm, and emotional tone. This task encourages dancers to deepen their sensitivity to sound as a source of physical inspiration, fostering the discovery of varied movement qualities and enhancing the connection between voice and body.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

Using the voice as a creative tool requires vulnerability, as it is an intimate expression that comes from deep within. The challenge lies in overcoming self-consciousness to develop a rich and varied vocal toolkit—one that can not only provoke movement in others but also generate authentic movement from within oneself.

### REFLECTION:

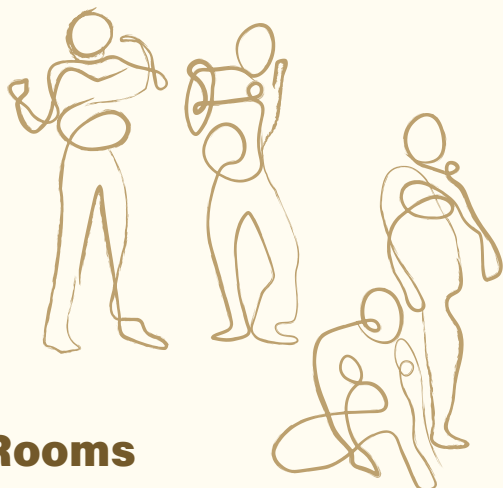
This task reveals the deep connection between voice and movement, highlighting how sound can initiate, shape, and transform physical expression. It encourages participants to tap into personal and emotional layers of creativity, often leading to greater confidence, presence, and awareness of how vocal texture influences the quality and intention behind movement.

### TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflection of Co-Creation  
3.6.2. Non-Verbal communication

Video Training Kit:

A.2. Playing with sounds of voice for physical inspiration



## Rooms

### INSTRUCTION:

The task is to explore the potential for improvisation that the various rooms of a whole building offer, focusing on their function and the objects within them. To draw inspiration from these spaces, participants can ask themselves or experiment with the following gestures:

- In the lobby: How do I wait? How can I play with coats and enter the theater?
- In the kitchen: How can I use dishes, tables, and sinks?
- In the technical room: How do technicians interact with tools and projectors?
- In the dressing rooms: What are the gestures the artist makes while preparing to go on stage?
- In the performance hall: How do I settle in? How do I watch the show? What movements relate to my emotions as a spectator?
- In the office: How can I play with the curtains, the phone, and other office objects?
- On the stairs: How do I move up and down? What are my intentions during this movement?

### OBJECTIVE:

Exploring a whole building allows to create a performance in form of a walkthrough, focusing on exploring spaces beyond their usual function. In these areas, dance is inspired by everyday gestures and shaped by the functional use of the space, the site's historical and emotional resonance, and the colours and atmosphere of each room as sources of creative movement.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

The challenge lies in fully immersing oneself in the unique atmosphere of each space and allowing that environment to inspire spontaneous movement and creativity. Each room has its own distinct energy, history, and function, and the task is to navigate these diverse spaces while responding to their individual qualities—whether it's through the memory of the space, its colors, or its everyday use. The dancer must balance exploring these varied atmospheres while maintaining a sense of continuity in the improvisation process, turning each room into a fertile ground for creative expression without predetermined outcomes.

### REFLECTION:

This task reveals how the diverse environments can serve as rich sources of inspiration for movement. Each room's unique atmosphere—shaped by its function, history, and sensory qualities—invites dancers to engage with the space in an intuitive and exploratory way. By responding to the specific energy of each room, participants deepen their understanding of how physical surroundings can influence movement. This process encourages creativity, spontaneity, and an embodied connection to space.

### TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

5.1.4. Sources of inspiration and starting points

Video Training Kit:

B.2. Watching a show: spectators emotions as a catalyst

B.3. Using familiar space in a different way



## Statues

### INSTRUCTION:

This exercise could help participants discover new moving methods by taking inspiration from statues.

Starting by looking together at images of famous and not so famous statues and noticing how muscle tension is used in their forms. Particularly in Athens this was fun to use, because these are a part of the environment surrounding the participants.

From there, the participants created at least four different statues (or repeated one if needed) and then transitioned between them using as much muscle engagement as possible.

Then adding slow motion and for an extra challenge, they could also play with changing levels while moving between statues.

Then last but not least topping it off with facial expressions that fitted the statues.

### OBJECTIVE:

Getting the participants to move in new and unexpected ways. Creating body awareness, use of muscle and body control. Awareness of personal space and where one is in space as a group. Spark creativity, using visual inspiration and this can be found everywhere. Creating transitions which is the beginning of a choreography.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

Keeping muscles engaged throughout the whole movement. Staying aware of what the participants are doing themselves and at the same time everyone around them. Learning how to keep a straight face and act their way through it even though this makes you laugh a lot. Making smooth but controlled transitions in slow motion. Trying to find new shapes and not only recreating a statue but finding new ones that fit the theme. Exploring different levels and spaces.

### REFLECTION:

In this exercise, it is quite easy to add the layers as this could connect to how one might have played as a child and now again as an adult.

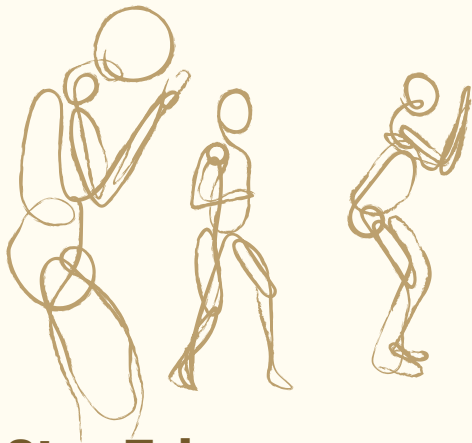
### TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

5.1.4. Sources of inspiration and starting points

Video Training Kit:

C.1. From statues to self-directed movement



## StoryTales

### INSTRUCTION:

The exercise "StoryTales" explores childhood games to foster connection in the co-creation process. By dancing through childhood stories, participants explore global childhood games through movement.

Move, mimic, and tell your story—without words or explanation. This task becomes a playful journey of memory, culture, and creativity. Participants co-create a group choreography by embodying childhood games from their own cultures through movement and storytelling, fostering surprise, play, and collective interpretation.

This childhood movement game can serve as both an icebreaker and a source of inspiration for improvisational choreography games.

#### 1. Circle Formation & Focus:

All participants stand in a circle or as a choir group, facing the front.

One person steps into the center (or the front) and becomes the "Game Leader".

#### 2. Game Leader Role:

The Game Leader begins moving and re-enacts a childhood game from their culture using gestures and body movement (e.g., chase, freeze, hide-and-seek, jump rope).

They speak in their native language to introduce the game, describe actions, or shout game phrases (e.g., "Fly, fly!", "Black Queen!", "Simon says!").

No translation is given—movement is the

primary form of communication.

The Game Leader moves expressively, acting out the game's rules or dynamics.

#### 3. Group Response:

The rest of the group watches and begins to mimic, interpret, or respond physically to the leader movements, even if they don't understand the language.

This creates a collective physical dialogue.

Participants co-create movement sequences by guessing, following, and improvising within the spirit of the game.

#### 4. Rotation & Continuation:

After approximately one minute, a new participant takes on the role of Game leader from a different side of the circle. The process is repeated with a new game, new language, and new gestures.

Continue until several games/stories have been shared.

#### 5. Creative Rules & Co-Creation Focus:

Each Leader "teaches" without explanation—using body and play, not words. Games may be repeated or remixed by the group, forming a cumulative dance/storyline.

Encourage the use of spatial directions, rhythms, tempo changes, and interaction (e.g., tag, freeze, follow-the-leader).

The goal is not perfection, but shared imagination and discovery.

The outcome of this task is a co-created choreography inspired by global games and cultural memories, with participants engaging in multilingual, movement-based storytelling, fostering group bonding through curiosity, empathy, and play.

### OBJECTIVE:

This task engages participants in embodied storytelling through childhood games from diverse cultures, promoting cultural exchange, non-verbal communication, and collaborative choreography. It fosters creativity, inclusivity, and improvisation in a playful environment,

where participants co-create choreography and communicate through movement and native language without translation, building connections through embodied play and shared imagination.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

Participants are challenged to co-create meaning and movement through non-verbal cues, intuition, and shared play, especially when language is not understood. The task involves trusting the spirit of the game, listening with the body, and co-creating through movement intuition. Facilitators should observe how participants decode and embody unfamiliar games, encourage risk-taking, and guide the group to focus on rhythm, dynamics, and group energy rather than accuracy, while supporting moments of mimicry, adaptation, and invention.

### REFLECTION:

Reflection formats can be adapted based on the group's age and needs. Options include group discussions to explore feelings about following unfamiliar games, interpreting rules, recognizing movements, and leading without words; partner sharing to reflect on memorable games and the physical changes when switching roles; and creative reflections like drawing, writing, or body mapping to express standout moments or sensations. These activities help deepen understanding, connect experiences, and support embodied learning. Facilitators can choose 2–3 of these formats, based on the group's age and time available.

### TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:  
3.3. Embrace the individual perspectives  
3.6.1. Verbal communication

Video Training Kit:  
C.2. Childhood Games as Cultural Connectors in Co-Creation



## Storytelling with gestures

### INSTRUCTION:

This exercise explores storytelling using everyday gestures.

Give the space to two participants and let the others observe. "Participant 1" starts with a gesture and "Participant 2" reacts to this, then "Participant 1" will react and keep going, just like a dialogue.

Participants are allowed to use familiar movements to communicate a story, reacting to one another in a playful and spontaneous way. By treating gestures as a non-verbal dialogue, participants naturally build a shared story through movement. This can start small and quite natural as, if you're watching people on the street to, big and comical or dramatic.

Gestures vary across cultures, which makes this exercise a fascinating way to reveal personal backgrounds, create moments of understanding and could even spark confusion that leads to deeper connection.

### OBJECTIVE:

This exercise encourages playful interaction and spontaneity. Shows the diversity or recognisable gestures across cultures. It develops a new way how the participants can create a dialogue using storytelling as a non-verbal communication. This is also very helpful when the group doesn't have a common language or two and this breaks down barriers of how one can talk to one another and work together.



## CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

Creating a story using only gestures. Really engaging with one another and reacting naturally, dramatically or over the top to the others' proposal. Understanding and interpreting unfamiliar gestures.

## REFLECTION:

This exercise is great for encouraging creativity and group interaction while highlighting the power of non-verbal communication. It can be repeated on a second day to see how stories and gestures evolve over time as the participants get more relaxed with one another.

## TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

- 1.3. Significance of daily gestures
- 3.6.2. Non-Verbal communication

Video Training Kit:

- B.1. Why use daily gestures – Storytelling



## Touch (warming up)

### INSTRUCTION:

#### 1. *Awakening the Sense of Touch:*

Sit on the floor and begin by rubbing your hands together to activate the sensation of friction. Feel the warmth building up between your palms.

#### 2. *Exploring Contact with the Body:*

Gradually, place your hands briefly on different parts of your body (e.g., arm, belly, thigh, knee). Observe the transfer of warmth from your palms to each area.

#### 3. *Deepening the Sensation:*

Continue touching various parts of your body while consciously thinking about transferring warmth into the area. Notice the difference in posture and bodily awareness between simply placing your hand and actively directing warmth.

#### 4. *Start moving through space:*

Extend this exploration to the floor. First, touch areas close to you, then progressively reach further. Observe how your body position shifts naturally in response. Let the movement emerge organically without forcing any adjustment.

#### 5. *Interacting with the Environment:*

Begin touching other elements in the space, such as a wall or an object. Pay attention to the differences in texture and temperature between your body and the inanimate environment.

#### 6. *Imagining Touch Beyond Reach:*

Experiment with mentally sensing the touch

of things you cannot physically reach, such as the ceiling or a beam of light. How does this imagined touch influence your movement and perception?

### **7. *Returning to the Body:***

Reconnect by touching your own body again. Compare the sensation of touching the lifeless space versus the living body. Observe any newfound awareness.

### **8. *Walking and Alternating Contact:***

Start moving around the space, alternating between touching objects and different parts of your body. Allow the movement to remain fluid and natural.

### **9. *Introducing Contact with Others:***

Gradually, extend your touch to other participants. Start with gentle, soft contact on areas such as extremities, shoulders, hands, feet, the crown of the head, and the back. Only proceed to more central areas like the abdomen, neck, knees, or thighs if the other person is receptive to your touch.

## **OBJECTIVE:**

Cultivate a heightened awareness of touch, fostering an embodied connection with ourselves, the space, and other participants.

## **CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:**

Throughout this process, participants may face moments of disconnection, discomfort, or hesitation. Some may experience mental drifting or self-consciousness, especially in slow or introspective phases. Gentle verbal cues such as "Stay with the sensation" or creating a low-stimulus atmosphere can help sustain presence and reduce internal judgment.

When there is discomfort with touch, whether with one's own body or others, it's important to offer alternatives: imagined touch, indirect contact through fabric, or skipping parts entirely. Participants may find it hard to perceive subtle sensory differences, like the distinction between passive and intentional touch. Encouraging slowness, repetition, and using metaphors (e.g., "going into the floor") can enrich their somatic awareness.

A common resistance to slow pacing may arise, particularly in those used to dynamic movement. Framing slowness as a tool for depth, and

giving clear but spacious timing, can make the process more accessible. As touch expands to the environment and others, navigating boundaries and interpersonal contact becomes key. Encourage gradual approach—starting with neutral areas like shoulders or hands—and emphasize that consent must be mutual and continuous.

Finally, emotional responses may surface through touch. Normalizing this and allowing moments of stillness or reflection helps participants integrate what arises without pressure.

## **REFLECTION:**

This improvisation practice offers a gentle yet powerful entry into embodied awareness, especially for participants with little or no background in contemporary dance. Beginning with self-contact and gradually expanding toward the surrounding space and others, the process reveals how intention transforms even the simplest gesture. Participants notice the shift between passive touch and the imagined transmission of warmth, discovering new ways of sensing and relating to their bodies—without the need for technical knowledge or formal movement vocabulary.

As the exploration moves into relational space, themes of vulnerability, consent, and connection naturally arise. Touch becomes not only physical but also imaginative and deeply personal. The open, slow-paced structure allows each person to engage at their own rhythm, making the practice accessible and meaningful. In this way, "Touch" serves as both an introduction to somatic experience and a quiet reminder that presence, rather than performance, lies at the heart of embodied exploration.

## **TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):**

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

1.2. Key elements of Contemporary dance

3.6.3. Physical contact

5.1.4. Sources of inspiration and starting points



## Trustcare

### INSTRUCTION:

"Trustcare" is an exercise that invites participants to explore trust, emotional connection, and rhythmic interplay, fostering deep personal growth and collaborative exploration.

It incorporates dream states and emphasizes taking care of a partner from a distance, presenting a challenge where participants nurture and support each other without direct physical contact, if not needed.

This trust game goes beyond physical movement, delving deeper into trust, emotional connection, and rhythmic interplay, cultivating a profound sense of interconnectedness and creative expression.

#### 1. *Blindfolded Movement with Changing Speed:*

One partner is blindfolded, instructed to move freely and change speed from slow to quick. The leader must intuitively respond to their partner's movements, anticipating the next steps without relying on visual cues. The guiding partner may need to use their voice more frequently, offering gentle, reassuring directions, or providing quick, light touches to guide the blindfolded participant's movement and support their improvisation safely.

#### 2. *Heightened Intuition:*

The leader should be highly attuned to their partner's energy and subtle movements. As the blindfolded participant moves, the leader adjusts their pace and position, staying slightly ahead or beside them to maintain guidance without being overly controlling.

The focus here is on intuition, with the leader's movements flowing with the blindfolded person's, ensuring a smooth, connected experience.

#### 3. *Stopping the Partner:*

The leader will eventually stop the blindfolded participant by gently placing their palms on the participant's shoulders and applying a soft, calming impulse. This signals the participant to slow down and transition into a state of rest. The gesture should feel natural and soothing, encouraging relaxation and a sense of surrender.

#### 4. *Rolling Down to Sleep:*

The leader places their hands gently on the shoulders of the blindfolded participant and encourages them to roll down to the floor. This movement symbolizes the transition from wakefulness to sleep, with the rolling down representing a surrendering of control and a relaxation into the floor. The focus is on releasing tension and fully embracing the feeling of letting go.

#### 5. *Dream Phrase Creation*

After the trustcare, participants individually create a short movement phrase inspired by their experience of being led with eyes closed. Encourage them to draw on sensations of disorientation, flow, vulnerability, and support. Then, in pairs or small groups, they can blend their phrases into a shared "dream sequence," exploring transitions, timing, and emotional tone together.

### OBJECTIVE:

This task challenges participants to deepen their trust-building practice by incorporating speed and intuitive movement, with one partner blindfolded. It explores the concept of taking care from a distance, where the guiding partner responds quickly and effectively to their blindfolded partner's needs, while maintaining a deep connection and awareness.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

This task deepens the connection between participants, transitioning from slower to more dynamic, responsive interaction. The leader must be attuned to both the physical needs of the blindfolded participant and the emotional

tone of the moment, ensuring that both feel safe and supported. The act of rolling down to the floor symbolizes letting go, both physically and emotionally, reflecting the transition from wakefulness to a more relaxed, meditative state, and mirroring the surrender of trust and control.

In this task, the leader must act quickly and intuitively, adjusting their pace and position without visual cues. This requires heightened sensitivity and responsiveness to the blindfolded participant's needs.

As the leader's role shifts to guiding more quickly, it becomes challenging to match the blindfolded partner's pace and energy. The leader must remain emotionally present, offering reassurance through touch and guidance. Transitioning into the rolling motion requires a shift in pace, emphasizing relaxation and surrender.

## REFLECTION:

The task explores trust through movement, touch, and guidance, with moving eyes closed increasing vulnerability and fostering a deeper connection and dependence on others.

The shift between slow, controlled actions and quick, reactive movements highlights the dynamic rhythm of body and trust, with the smooth rolling contrasting the intensity of the guiding actions.

Emotional connection arises through physical vulnerability and guidance, with the rolling movement inviting peaceful surrender and connecting both partners in a meditative rhythm.

The guide's touch and voice provide emotional cues to support the blindfolded participant, and the rolling motion enhances this emotional connection through its contrast to the active elements.

Participants gain a deeper understanding of trust, support, and how the body communicates emotions and rhythms in a collaborative setting.

## TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

2.2. Well-being of the participants

3.6.3. Physical contact

Video Training Kit:

A.1. In Sync: Trust and Care in Blind Movement



## Vocalmotion

### INSTRUCTION:

"Vocalmotion" is a tool designed to explore the use of voice in relation to movement. Use this task as a collaborative experience, where both participants and the, if present, co-create movement and sound together. The integration of voice, movement, and live music fosters a shared creative process, encouraging spontaneous interaction and collective expression, while allowing for the organic development of new ideas.

#### 1. Vocal Warm-Up:

- Begin with vocal exercises, using sounds like "ae" and "e" to connect breath, voice, and physicality.
- Focus on the resonance and energy that these sounds bring to the body. Gradually experiment with expanding your vocal range and exploring different tonal qualities.

#### 2. Voice and Movement Integration:

- Encourage participants to move freely through space while vocalizing, improvising with both their bodies and voices.
- Emphasize the importance of finding balance in movement and vocal expression, with a focus on synchronizing breath, voice, and physicality.

#### 3. Partner Work:

- Pair up with a partner to explore balance through touch and support. Practice moments of stillness and tension, incorporating both vocalization and movement into your interaction.

#### 4. Live Music Collaboration:

- Work with live musical accompaniment, such as guitar or percussion, allowing the rhythm and tone of the music to influence your vocal and physical expression.

#### 5. Rhythmic Dance Improvisation:

- Respond to percussion rhythms by improvising movement, adjusting to varying tempos and dynamics.
- Explore how rhythm shapes the flow of movement, with an emphasis on synchronizing your movements with the live music.
- Experiment with using your voice in different moments, allowing it to evolve with the rhythm and movement.

### OBJECTIVE:

This task aims to integrate voice, movement, and rhythm in a creative, collaborative exploration. Participants will deepen their awareness of the connection between vocalization and physical movement, while exploring how live music, rhythm, and improvisation can influence emotional expression. The task encourages spontaneity and creativity in both individual and partnered movement explorations.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

Balancing voice and movement requires participants to synchronize their vocalizations with physical movements, understanding how each one influences the other.

Working with a partner to maintain balance while integrating vocal expression and movement can be challenging, particularly when exploring moments of tension or stillness. Responding to live rhythms demands heightened attention to both the music and physical responses, fostering improvisation and real-time adaptation.

Collaborating with a musician brings its own set of challenges, as participants must stay attuned to the musician's rhythm, tone, and energy shifts, requiring a dynamic, responsive exchange that can push their creative boundaries.

### REFLECTION:

Reflect on how the connection between voice and movement can deepen participants' physical and vocal expression. Consider how guiding collaboration between partners and responding to live music influences their creative choices in movement and vocalization. Reflect on the challenges participants may face in balancing rhythm, vocal expression, and movement, and how you can support them in overcoming these through practice and improvisation. Finally, think about how incorporating emotional layers into the task can enrich participants' overall expression and enhance the collaborative process within the group.

### TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

2.4. Self-expression

5.1.4. Sources of inspiration and starting points

Video Training Kit:

C.1. The Poem in Motion: Exploring Pulse, Voice and Movement





## Voicing Movement

### INSTRUCTION:

Choose a well-known song that all participants can recognize and sing, such as a familiar children's or adult song. This could be a classic children's song or a familiar adult song—something that participants can easily connect with and join in. This will create a sense of unity and playfulness during the final group choir moment.

**Group Division:** One group reads and performs a poem vocally while seated on pillows; the other group responds with improvised movement inspired by the text.

**First Round (No Music):** Read the poem using varied tones, pacing, and delivery styles. (e.g., whisper, shout, fast, slow). Swap parts to gain new perspectives.

**Second Round (With Music):** Integrate movement and voice with music. Let rhythm guide vocal and physical expression.

**Slow Movement Phase:** As the music intensifies, perform extremely slow movements, focusing on intention and presence.

**Breath & Sound Exploration:** Set the text aside and explore how breath and internal vocal sounds guide movement.

**Final Transition:** Move as a group to the back wall while maintaining breath and vocal focus.  
**Final Moment:** The group performs a rhythmic, playful choir rendition of a song – emphasizing timing, unity, and joyful energy.

### Summary:

This task engages participants in reading, moving, and connecting to a poem through voice and movement, exploring the interplay of breath, music, and physical expression, ultimately coming together in a final unified, playful choir performance.

### OBJECTIVE:

To explore the creative relationship and integration of text, voice, breath, and movement in a playful, improvisational environment, fostering expression, presence, body awareness, and group connection through performance.

### CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:

The challenge of this practice involves coordinating vocal and physical responses to abstract cues, balancing individual improvisation with group rhythm, and managing transitions between text-based and text-free phases. Participants must maintain fluidity and intention during slow movements and breath-focused tasks while staying aware of rhythm and group dynamics. Additionally, transitioning from verbal to breath-based expression and exploring extreme slowness with control and presence are key challenges.

### REFLECTION:

This task emphasizes the connection between internal expressions (breath, voice) and external expressions (movement, rhythm). Participants will deepen their awareness of how text transforms into embodied performance and how group dynamics foster a shared creative experience. The final choir moment highlights the joy and unity found in collaborative rhythmic play.

In reflecting on the experience, consider how the text transformed as it was embodied through movement. Think about what you discovered in the connection between your voice and physical expression. Reflect on how focusing on breath and slowness influenced your concentration and observe any shifts that occurred when the group united as a choir.

## TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:  
5.1.4. Sources of inspiration and starting points

Video Training Kit:

C.1. Voicing Politics: Exploring Poetic Expression Through Movement

C.1. Timing and Text: Exploring Improvisation Through Children's Song



### 1-2-3 freeze

#### INSTRUCTION:

It is a game of chasing.

##### *Set up:*

- One player is the "Caller".
- The other players stand at a starting line, a few meters away from the Caller.

##### *How to Play:*

1. The Caller turns their back to the players and loudly says, "1-2-3 Freeze!" while facing away.
2. While the Caller is counting, the players run toward them as quickly as possible.
3. When the Caller says "Freeze!" and turns around, all players must freeze in place.
4. If the Caller catches any player moving, that player must return to the starting line.
5. The game continues until one player reaches and touches the Caller.

##### *Chasing Rule:*

- When a player touches the Caller, the Caller must immediately try to chase and catch any of the other players.
- If the Caller catches one player, that player becomes the new Caller for the next round.
- If players manages to escape, the game restarts with the same Caller.

### *Alternative Way to Play:*

- The Caller can change the speed and rhythm of how they say "1-2-3 Freeze!".
- They can say it slowly, quickly, or with pauses, making the game more unpredictable.
- The players must adjust their movements accordingly—moving slowly if the Caller speaks slowly, and quickly if they speak fast.

### *Exploring Space in 3D:*

- The Caller can change their facing direction every time they start counting.
- This means that instead of always running in a straight line toward the Caller, players must adjust their direction based on where the Caller is facing.
- This adds a three-dimensional exploration of the space, making players aware of their surroundings and how they navigate them.
- It also increases the challenge, as players must react quickly to new orientations.

### **OBJECTIVE:**

Ice breaking, group cohesion, creating joy, introduce contemporary dance fundamental elements: movement qualities, the use of space, the use of pause and stillness in the movement, rhythm dynamics.

### **CHALLENGE OF PRACTICE:**

One of the great things about "1-2-3 Freeze!" is that it can be played by participants who speak different languages. This game is widely known in many countries under different names, making it familiar to players from diverse backgrounds. More importantly, it relies on the sound and rhythm of the Caller's voice rather than the actual meaning of the words. Players respond to tone, speed, and pauses, allowing them to intuitively follow the game without needing a shared language. This makes "1-2-3 Freeze!" a fantastic activity for multicultural groups, promoting fun, movement, and connection beyond language barriers.

### **REFLECTION:**

"1-2-3 Freeze!" is a simple yet dynamic game that encourages movement, attention, and interaction. Its flexible rules allow for creative variations, such as adjusting speed, rhythm, and direction. Most importantly, its reliance on vocal tone rather than language makes it an inclusive activity for multicultural groups. As a well-known game across many cultures, it becomes a shared reference point that fosters connection, play, and joy without the need for words. Another great advantage is that it's ideal for mixed-age groups of kids and adults. The simplicity of the rules, combined with the space for improvisation and adaptation, makes it accessible and enjoyable for all ages, encouraging intergenerational play and shared fun.

### **TRAINING KIT REFERENCE (VIDEO AND WRITTEN):**

Practices & Reflections of Co-Creation:

2.2. Well-being of the participants

3.7. Working with children in multigenerational group

5.1.4. Sources of inspiration and starting points

Video Training Kit:

C.2. From Playground to Dancefloor the dynamic of a simple game

Appendix

CONTEXT OF CHALLENGE

The 4 key workshops

Athens, Greece (11th-13th April 2024)	Sitia, Crete (29 Aug - 1st Sept 2024)	Briançon, France (20th-22nd Sept 2024)	Karlovac, Croatia (25th-27th Oct 2024)
<b>Participants</b> Immigrants (Somalia, China, Bangladesh, Ukraine)	Mixed group of locals and visitors	10 participants, diverse ages and experiences	20 (10-62 years old)
<b>Profile</b> Strong cultural diversity, influencing participation (dressing, publicity). Strong dynamic of integration and gradual adaptation to linguistic and social challenges.	14 to 76 year old, cultural and generational diversity	Group exploring a rural theatre, immersive and participatory approach, importance of the heritage context	Intergenerational and multicultural group (Croatia, Slovenia, Canada), diversity of dance experiences, progressive integration of novices
<b>Challenges</b> Language barriers, cultural & religious diversity	Small community introduced to contemporary dance for the first time	Multi-language communication (English, French, German)	Generational and cultural differences, adaptation of exercises to varying physical abilities
<b>Method</b> Body language & improvisation performing in nature	Participative approach and improvisation, performing in public space	Exploration of the theatre and the city, improvisation, co-creation in small groups, interaction with space and the sounds of the place.	Co-creation, improvisation, and interaction with a live musician to enrich the sensory experience
			



